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Editor's Note: The President was in Chillicothe, OH, on September 10, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, September 10, 2004

Remarks in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

September 3, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. What a spectacular day. Thank you all for being here. It's great to be in the land of kind people and tall corn. Laura and I are proud to be here. We started early this morning in Pennsylvania, then went to Wisconsin. We're ending our day in this beautiful and important State. You might remember it's the State that started me on the way to the nomination 4 years ago.

We have a—we've got a real soft spot in our heart for Iowa. It's going to be even softer—with your help, we're going to carry Iowa this November. I'm here to ask for the vote. I believe you got to get out and tell the people what you believe and ask for their help, and I'm here to ask for it.

And I'm thrilled to be traveling with Laura. Today I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in there, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm real proud of my runningmate. Dick Cheney is a—he's a fine guy. You know, it's pretty clear he wasn't the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] It's not why I picked him. I picked him because of his experience, his steady judgment, and because he can get the job done.

I'm proud to be standing up here with Chuck Grassley. He's a great United States Senator. Every time I talk to him he says, "Remember Iowa." You're lucky to have him in the Senate, and I hope you keep him there.

I'm proud also to be here with your Congressman, Jim Leach. He's a fine, honorable, decent citizen of the State of Iowa, and I'm proud to call him friend.

I appreciate all the statehouse people who are here, the local officials who are here. I want to thank Majority Leader Chuck Gipp for being here.

I want to thank my friend Dave Roederer, who is the statewide chairman for this campaign here. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who are going to put up the signs, make the phone calls, and register your friends and neighbors to vote.

We have a duty to vote in this country, and as you get out to register friends, make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats. You might remember Zell Miller. There's a lot of folks like Zell who understand, with 4 more years this country will be safer, stronger, and better for every American.

We are approaching an historic national election, and the time for choosing is almost here. This election will come down to the records we have built, the convictions that we hold, and the visions that guide us. I look forward to campaigning in Iowa a lot. I look forward to coming—I'll tell you where I stand. I'll tell you what I believe, and I'll tell you where I'll lead this country for the next 4 years.

I believe that every child can learn, and I know that every school must teach. Because we're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations, because we've raised the bar, because we believe we ought to measure so we can solve problems early, before it's too late, we're closing an achievement gap in America, and nothing will hold us back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor America's seniors with good health care. And I appreciate working with Chairman Chuck Grassley on strengthening Medicare. It made no sense to have a Medicare system where the Government would pay thousands of dollars for heart surgery but not one dime for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place. Beginning in 2006, seniors will have prescription drug coverage. Rural hospitals

in Iowa will now be taken care of. We're not turning back.

I believe strongly in the innovative spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers, and ranchers. And so we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. We have been through a lot together in this economy. We've been through a recession, corporate scandals, and an attack on our country which cost us dearly. But because we acted, this economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

This morning, we received the jobs report for August. It shows that our economy has added 144,000 new jobs. Plus revisions upwards of about 60,000 for the previous 2 months. We've added 22,000 manufacturing jobs last month. We've added over 1.7 million jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is 4.4 percent. This economy is strong. The farm economy is strong, and we intend to keep it that way.

I believe a President must confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running on a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The world in which we are living is changing. Just think about what's happened after a generation. Most people had one job for their entire career, and most of those people were men. Today, women make up a significant portion of the workplace. They work inside the home and outside the home. And yet, most of our fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. And so, to make sure that citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices, we will transform these systems to make our country a better place.

Any plan has got to begin with making sure that we have a growing economy. This global market is expanding. It's creating new markets and new competitions. To make sure that we have jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To make sure jobs are here in America and this economy continues to grow, Congress needs to pass a sound energy plan and get it to my desk, an energy plan that says we'll encourage conservation, that we'll have clean coal technology, that we'll be wise about how we explore for resources here at home, but an energy plan as well that understands the great promise of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. In order to keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs here, we've got to get rid of the needless regulations that harm our small businesses, and we need tort reform so people can keep their doors open. To have jobs here in America, we need a level playing field when it comes to trade. We opened up our markets for foreign goods, and that's good for you. You see, when you have more choices, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. What I'm saying to the world is, "You treat us the way we treat you." You see, we can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, so long as the rules are fair.

And one reason this economy is strong in Iowa is because we're selling Iowa farm products all around the world.

In order to make sure we've got jobs here in America, we need to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. It would be a big mistake to run up the taxes on the American people. To keep the economy strong, we've got to keep your taxes low.

I tell you, we've got an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has thus far promised $2 trillion in new spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, we've still got a couple of months to go. [*Laughter*] It's awfully tempting out there to tell people what they want to hear, particularly when it comes to spending your money. So they said, "How are you going to pay for all that money—all that spending?" He said, "That's simple. I'm just going to tax the rich."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes, we've heard that before, haven't we? First of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to support all his programs. Secondly, the rich figure out a way to dodge it, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

A drag on our economy is the Tax Code, which is a complicated mess. It is filled with special interest loopholes. Our people spend 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year on the Tax Code. The American people deserve better, and our economy needs a different Tax Code. So in a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

One way to make sure we've got jobs here is to make sure our worker training programs work. We're going to reform the WIA, the Workforce Investment Act. We'll make more money available to our community colleges to make sure we're able to match the workers with the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

To make sure people can cope in a changing world, we've got to make sure our kids get a great education. Most new jobs are filled by people with 2 years of college, yet only about one in four of our students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance at our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we need to do more to make sure quality health care is available and affordable. You see, more than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. In a new term, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

I met with Marshall Petersen today. He runs—he and his family run Hawkeye Company. It's a small business here in Cedar Rapids. He said that the insurance costs have been rising rapidly over the next years—over the last years. He's worried about making premiums for his employees. He supports association health plans, the pooling efforts, because he believes his business can reduce costs. He said, "This is going to allow small businesses to have lower risk. It's going to allow me to retain quality employees." We must change our way of thinking about small-business insurance in America.

To help more Americans find affordable coverage, we'll offer tax credits to encourage small businesses, employees to set up health savings accounts. To make sure medicine is available to all, we will expand community and health centers all across the country. Every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. And to make sure health care is available and affordable, we got to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and running your costs up.

We have a national problem when it comes to medical liability. I've talked to docs all over the country who are worried about staying in business, who are anxious about being able to practice their science of healing. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-hospital and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, in order to bring stability to people's lives, we must encourage an ownership society in America. One of the great statistics of the recent times has been the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. Think about that. The minority homeownership gap in America is closing. More and more of our fellow citizens are opening up the door to their home saying, "Welcome to my house."

Over the next 4 years, we'll expand homeownership in America. And to make sure that people have confidence in the future, we must allow younger workers to take some of their own tax money and set up personal savings accounts. We'll protect Society Security. Nothing is going to change, as a matter of fact, for older citizens and baby boomers like me, when it comes to Social Security. The fiscal solvency of this system is in question for younger workers. We must think differently. We must allow younger workers to build their own nest egg that they can call their own, that they can pass on to the next generation. Social Security reform needs to be strengthened now.

What I'm telling you is we have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. My opponent's programs expand Government. My programs expand freedom and opportunity for every American.

In a changing world, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, the institutions like family and marriage and religious congregations that give our society purpose. Because family and work are sources of stability and dignity, I support welfare reform that strengthens family and requires work. I support a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. Religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion. Our Government must support those charities. It must never discriminate against faith-based programs.

Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges. And I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since that terrible morning, September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We're working to advance liberty in the broader Middle East because freedom will bring the hope and the peace we all long for. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was a fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Today, because the United States and our friends and allies acted with firm resolve, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. Because we have led, America and the world are safer.

The progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing, even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently. We must deal with threats before they fully materialize. In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat.

I went to the United States Congress. Members of both political parties looked at the intelligence I looked at, remembered the history of Saddam Hussein, and came to the came conclusion: He was a threat. And they authorized the use of force—one of whom was my opponent. He looked at the very same intelligence I looked at. He came to the same conclusion I came to, and when it came time to authorize the use of force, he voted yes.

The last option of a President is commit troops into combat. That's why I went to the United Nations. I was hoping that diplomacy would deal with this threat. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I did. They had a lengthy debate, and they came to a conclusion with a 15-to-nothing vote that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or

face serious consequences. The free world spoke again.

As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. He was not about to disclose or disarm. As a matter of fact, when inspectors were sent into his country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make. I had to make a decision, a decision that only comes to the Oval Office, a decision no President would ask for but must be prepared to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, because we acted in our self-interest, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq have been liberated. Our world is changing. Freedom is on the march. Think about this. In Afghanistan it wasn't all that long ago that the people of that country were living in darkness under the rule of the Taliban, a barbaric group of people who wouldn't even let young girls go to school, who would whip their mothers in the public square because they weren't toeing the line completely. Today in Afghanistan, a brief period after the Taliban have been removed, over 10 million people have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. It's an amazing statistic, isn't it? People love freedom around the world. Liberty is powerful.

In Iraq, the country now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. We're standing with the people in those countries. We're standing with them because they long for freedom, and we're standing with them because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

As importantly, we're serving a vital and historic cause. Free societies do not export terror. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentment and violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps our Nation become more secure. So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies. We'll help them stand up their own armies so they can defeat the few who are trying to hold back the demands and the desires of the many. We will help those countries move toward elections and get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

At bases across our country, I've had the high privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

I have made a commitment to our troops and to their loved ones. They will have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress and proposed $87 billion of funding for body armor and fuel and spare parts and ammunition, that which was necessary to help our troops in Afghanistan and in Iraq. We received great support for that initiative. The support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As a matter of fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked to explain why, you might remember he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." He then was asked—he said he's proud of his vote, and he just finally said, when pressed, it was a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We put together an alliance to help us. There's nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan and some 30 nations in Iraq. I appreciate the contributions these countries are making. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work with our friends and allies in the cause of freedom and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength

is to advance freedom. I'll tell you why I believe so strongly that societies can change: I've seen it firsthand. I've spent time at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's a friend. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. Yet it wasn't all that long ago, when you think about it, that our dads and grandfathers were at war with the Japanese in World War II. And yet, here we are, sitting at a table, talking about the peace. Here we are, talking about how to deal with Kim Chong-il in North Korea, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other troubled spots around the world. I doubt my conversations would be happening if Harry Truman and Americans right after World War II did not believe in the power of liberty to transform a society from one with which we were at war to one that we're now friends with.

Liberty can transform societies. One day, an American President will be sitting down with the duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace, talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place.

I've heard the skeptics and the doubters, but I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be the century of liberty. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. We will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the world to promote freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that needs firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. Workers in hardhats were screaming at me, "Whatever it takes." I was doing my best to comfort those who had been in the rubble, and a guy grabbed me by the arm and he said, "Don't let me down." As I wake up every morning, I think about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote, and I made a pledge that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:28 p.m. at Noelridge Park. In his remarks, he referred to Iowa State Representative Chuck Gipp; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who gave the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks in a Discussion in Broadview Heights, Ohio

September 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Go ahead and be seated. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. I appreciate you coming today. Thank you. Okay, be seated. We got some work to do here. Thanks for coming. I've got an interesting way to describe to you how we're going to make America a safer world and a more hopeful world. And today I'm going to do so by talking to some of your citizens about some interesting ideas as to how to improve life throughout America, throughout Ohio, and throughout the Cleveland area. Then I'd like to take some of your questions, if we've got time. Then I've got to get back on the bus. [*Laughter*]

See, I'm out—I believe you have to go ask people for the vote, and that's what we're doing in Ohio again, asking people for the vote.

Before I begin, before I talk about issues that are on your mind, I do want to talk about something that's on my mind and, I know, on your mind as well. Today on our TV screens, last night on our TV screens, we saw the horror of terror in Russia. And I can just imagine the heartfelt anguish of the moms and dads of those Russian kids. Our prayers are with those families, and yesterday is a grim reminder of the nature of the terrorists we face. That is why this country must be strong and diligent, never yielding. We must bring them to justice before they harm us.

So when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you'll never have to." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to my word. What a fabulous speech she gave, and she's a—you need to put me back in so she can have 4 more years as First Lady.

So I'm up there giving the speech, and I'm staring right at Janet Voinovich. What a comforting feeling that was. I appreciate George and Janet being here. Thank you all for coming. George Voinovich is a great United States Senator, and he needs to be reelected.

And then when I could tell Janet was tired of me looking at her, I switched over to Fran DeWine. She's not with us, but her great husband, Michael DeWine, the United States Senator from Ohio, is with us, and Alice, sweet Alice, Alice DeWine, a student at Miami University, Miami of Ohio. Alma mater, I want you to know, of my grandfather Marvin Pierce. You know, they always say politics is local. My grandfather Marvin Pierce went to Miami of Ohio. My other grandfather, Prescott Bush, was raised in Columbus, Ohio. You know, as I told them in Columbus the other day, "Why don't you put a home boy back in the White House."

Ralph Regula is with us, a great United States Congressman. Thank you for coming, Mr. Chairman. It's fitting we're here in a high school, and Ralph being here. He's a—he's got a lot to do with the Federal funding of schools. I really appreciate Steve Farnsworth, who is the superintendent of the Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School district. I want to thank Brian Wilch, who's the principal. If he thought bringing order to a high school with a bunch of high school kids was hard, he learned there's something harder, and that's welcoming a President. [*Laughter*] Thank you for your hard work; appreciate your hospitality.

Part of making sure America is a more hopeful place is to raise the standards in all schools, is to measure whether or not children are achieving those standards, is to correct problems early before it's too late, is to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, is to trust local people to make decisions for their schools, and that's what we're doing. And schools are improving around America because of it.

Mayor Glenn Goodwin is with us. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. Mayor Jerry Hruby is with us. I'm honored the two mayors are here. Where are they? Oh, thank you, Mayor. Thank you, Mayor. One time somebody said, "Did you ever give the mayor advice?" I said, "I did. Fill the potholes." [*Laughter*] Works every time. [*Laughter*]

Michael Hargrove—Mike, yes, thanks for coming. He's a—he's not going to believe I know this, but he's from Pampa, Texas. [*Laughter*] Isn't that right? Pampa, Texas, it's part of the panhandle. That's where they raise really fine people, good, solid, down-to-earth people who perform, and I appreciate Mike. He's a great baseball player for the Rangers. Thanks for coming.

In order to make sure America is a more hopeful place, we've got to make sure our economy grows. We've been through a lot in this economy. We've been through a recession. When you're out gathering people up for vote, remind them. If you've got the undecided person out there, just tell them the facts. The country has gone through a recession, went through corporate scandals which affected the confidence of our economy—the people in the country, which affects the economy. And we endured a terrorist attack, and that attack hurt our economy. In other words, there was great obstacles to growth, yet we're overcoming those obstacles today. The economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

One reason why it's strong and getting stronger is because we've got great workers. Another reason why is because the entrepreneurial spirit in America is alive and well. The small-business sector of our economy is

really good. Our farm economy is strong. The ranchers are making a living. We're overcoming the obstacles. I also think one of the reasons why is because of tax relief.

We're going to talk to some people who have benefited from the tax relief, small-business owner and a family. They can tell the story better than I can. But the facts are real. This month—last month, we added 144,000 new jobs. People are getting back to work. And when you look at June and July and revise the numbers upwards like they did, it means 200,000 new jobs were added in the last monthly report, over 1.7 million new jobs added since August of '03. The economy is growing. I understand there's places in America where—that lag behind the national growth rate. Ohio has got pockets of unemployment that are unacceptable. But the unemployment rate nationally is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

We have got a plan to make sure that people who want a job can find one. The plan says that in order to keep jobs in America, we've got to keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes on the people right now would hurt the economic vitality and growth.

There's a difference of opinion in this campaign, by the way. [*Laughter*] My opponent has already promised $2 trillion of new spending, and we've still got a little ways to go in the campaign. [*Laughter*] It's awfully tempting out there to tell people what they want to hear, and there's no telling how much more he's going to promise. But they've asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, don't worry, we'll just tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? You know what that means, "just tax the rich." First of all, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for $2 trillion of new spending. Second of all, the rich hire accountants for a reason. He's not going to be taxing anybody in '05, because he's not going to win. We're going to win Ohio, and we're going to win the country.

A couple of other things. The—so here's how you keep jobs here in America. You're wise about—we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington. We've got to keep your taxes low.

Congress will get an energy plan to my desk that encourages conservation; that encourages the use of renewables such as ethanol, biodiesel; that explores for ways to make sure that we use technology to leapfrog the current problems we have, like hydrogen-powered automobiles; that works on clean coal technology; that says we'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. It's a plan, though, that recognizes that we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy if we want to keep jobs here in America.

Our vision of economic vitality and growth says, we'll cut down on needless regulations and we support legal reform. We believe that lawyers—we believe these lawsuits are making it hard for small businesses to keep their doors open.

We believe, in order to keep jobs here in America, that trade ought to be free and fair. In other words, we open our markets for products from overseas, and that's good for consumers. See, if a consumer has got more to choose from, he or she is more likely to get the product you want, at a price you want, and at the quality you demand. So the only fair thing to do is to say to other countries like China, "You treat us the way we treat you," and that's precisely what this administration is doing. We are holding them to account when it comes to trade laws. We're making sure that trade is fair. That's why I took the action I did on steel, and the steel plants are up and running here in the Cleveland area and all around the State of Ohio because of the firm action this administration took.

A couple of other points I want to make right quick, and then we'll start talking to some people here. In order to make sure jobs stay here, our health care systems have to work well. See, health care is costly, and I think the role of Government is to address the root causes of high cost. We must allow small businesses to pool together, to pool risk together so they can purchase insurance at the same discounts that big businesses get to do. And that's important. That's an important policy, because 50 percent of the uninsured in America work for small businesses. So if we can help small businesses address

the cost of health care, it will help people get insurance.

Another thing we need to do is to make sure that we expand community health centers to every poor county in America. We want people, the low-income and the poor, to be able to get preventative health care in community health centers, not in emergency rooms in hospitals all over America.

Finally, in terms of health care, there's a lot of things we're going to do. We'll make sure the Medicare reforms we've got in place continue to work. Seniors, by the way, it makes no sense in old Medicare to say, "We'll pay for the hospitalization for a heart surgery and not pay for the prescription drugs that would have prevented the heart surgery from being needed in the first place." That's why we reformed and strengthened Medicare, so it worked on behalf of our seniors, and it made sense for American taxpayers.

Beginning in 2005, seniors will get free preventative screenings in Medicare. It never happened before. It's now happening because of our leadership, and I want to thank the Senators who are here and the Congressman who is here. You see, it makes sense to give seniors screening so you can detect problems early and begin to address them before they become acute. In 2006, seniors will have prescription drug coverage in Medicare. We went to Washington, DC, with the idea of solving problems. We have done the job when it comes to improving health care for our seniors.

Finally—one other point I want to make on health care, and if you got some other questions, I'll answer them. But listen, these frivolous lawsuits are running docs out of business and running the cost of medicine too high. This is a national problem. It's a national problem. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care because premiums are up, because doctors are being sued and they practice defensive medicine. The frivolous lawsuits hurt you as consumers. We need medical liability reform in Washington, DC—now.

This is—there is a big difference on this issue in this campaign. There is a fundamental difference in this campaign. You cannot choose between being pro-doctor, pro-hospital, and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney. I mean, you have to choose. You can't be for both. You can't be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You've got to choose. My opponent chose, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice.

One of the things, we're living in changing times. That's one of the points I tried to make the other night. It's a very important part of this campaign. It's who recognizes the times we live in and who's got a plan to help America. It's not dictate to Americans but help Americans realize their dreams. The systems that we now live under, the Tax Code, the health care plans, the worker training programs, and the retirement programs, were all designed for yesterday, if you think about it. And what I told the American people Thursday night is, the next 4 years we'll design the systems for tomorrow to help people realize their dreams, and we're going to talk a little bit about that today.

They say, "What do you mean?" Well, take a look at Social Security. Social Security is solvent for boomers like me and old guys like Voinovich—[*laughter*]—older guys like Voinovich. [*Laughter*] If you're retired or near retirement, you have nothing to worry about in Social Security. But if you're a younger worker just getting started, you better listen carefully to the rhetoric of this campaign. See, I believe we ought to strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal account that they can call their own.

It's a different attitude. It's a different way of looking at things, but it means the younger worker is going to get a better rate of return on the money. It means the younger worker will have a nest egg they can call their own. And it means the younger worker can take that nest egg and pass it on to another generation. It's a way to make sure Social Security fulfills its promise to the young people of America and encourage ownership at the same time.

I believe this country ought to set up opportunity zones. An opportunity zone says that if you've lost manufacturing jobs, if you've lost plants, if you've lost retail sales, you qualify. An opportunity zone is different from an empowerment zone. Empowerment

zones are the old zones that said it just—all that matters is the poverty levels. We're saying that matters too—poverty levels count—but if you've been affected by the changing times, you ought to be allowed to set up an opportunity zone. Parts of Ohio will qualify. These are changing times. The job base is changing.

Here's what an opportunity zone means. It means that the local governments will come together and present a transition plan that says, "We're going to reduce regulation. We're going to create an environment for economic growth." And the Federal Government will provide significant tax relief to businesses that provide businesses in those opportunity zones, will direct Federal monies to community colleges, will help with housing money. In other words, it will be an intensive, holistic effort to address the fact that the economy is changing, and that's what I want to spend some time talking about, as well as working some other issues.

We've got a small-business owner, Frank Piunno, with us today. There he is. Get up here, Frank. Frank is a—he's an entrepreneur. That means he's a dreamer, that he creates jobs because he has got a start—he started his own business or owns his own business. By the way, there's nothing better than a society in which more and more people are saying, "I own my own business." That's why we believe in an ownership society in America.

Frank, tell us what you do.

Frank Piunno. My company is Marketing Communication Resource, and we do confidential data printing and mailing. We do things like your patient—hospital patient bills. We print and mail those. We personalize printing for universities. We do work in the manufacturing segment. We do pricebooks and catalogs, mostly confidential information, printing it.

The President. Good, good. How many employees you got?

Mr. Piunno. We have 20 employees, 2 of which are my sons.

The President. Really? Good. Well, they probably want us to make sure the death tax is gone forever. So did you add any employees this year?

Mr. Piunno. Yes, we've added three employees this year.

The President. Why—why have you added three employees?

Mr. Piunno. Well, we've been able to take advantage of the tax credits to invest in equipment. But we've also been able to keep equity in the business, which has allowed us to add people.

The President. Yes. Interesting, isn't it? One of the things that sometimes these numbers really don't reflect is the fact that the small-business sector is adding people. See, he's added three this year, and that happens all over the country. One of the things that you like to hear, if you're a fellow like me, is that the small-business sector is thriving because most new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And when you hear Frank say, well, he's added three, that's good because there's a lot of Franks around adding 3 here, 10 there, 15 there. One of the other things—Frank is called an S corp. Right?

Mr. Piunno. Yes.

The President. That's a legal term. I'm not a lawyer either. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Piunno. Neither am I.

The President. That's why I said "either." See, here's something interesting about the tax relief we've provided that nobody—or very few people focus on, except for Frank. If you're an S corp or a sole proprietorship—these are legal terms for small businesses—you pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. Most small businesses are S corps, like Frank's, and sole proprietorships. So when you heard us say we're going to reduce taxes on everybody who pays taxes, reduce the individual income-tax rates, nearly a million small businesses benefited because they got more—they've got more money in their coffers. The tax relief helped him. It gave him a different frame of mind—putting words in his mouth. I'm not even a lawyer. Anyway—[*laughter*]

So one of the things, when they say they're going to tax the rich, think about small businesses. That's what they're talking about. When they run up the top rate, they're affecting S corps and sole proprietorships. It would be bad for our economy to take money out of this guy's small business. He's growing. Just when he's beginning to add people, why

would you want to tax him? It makes no economic sense to tax people like Frank.

What did you invest in?

Mr. Piunno. We—where? We invested in equipment, digital printing equipment, black equipment, and full-color equipment.

The President. See, he got extra tax benefits. We provided incentives for small businesses to invest. Why? Because most small businesses—most new jobs are created by small businesses. Secondly, when a company is investing, it means somebody has got to make the product that they're purchasing. So somebody has got to make this machine he bought. When we increase demand for goods and services through tax relief, the economy grows. Somebody has got to be working on the machine that he wants to purchase. More importantly, his workers become more productive, so they're more likely to keep a job.

Accurate?

Mr. Piunno. Yes.

The President. Good, yes. If this county is declared an opportunity zone, here's how Frank's business will benefit. First, because he's a small business, he'll receive additional tax savings. In other words, they'll say, "Here's more incentive to expand." Secondly, because he's a small business, he will receive more expensing allowance when it comes to purchasing equipment. Right now, the limit's at 100,000. We'll double the amount he can expense when he buys equipment. That will be helpful for this part of the world. Thirdly, the—he will get wage credit for hiring people who live in the opportunity zone. In other words, the opportunity zone says to a small business, "Stay here and expand, and there will be economic benefits if you do so." I'm pretty confident he would like this to be an opportunity zone here.

Mr. Piunno. Yes, I would.

The President. Yes. Well, it's got a very good chance of being one, because this part of the world is changing. That's what we're talking about. And so the question is, what do you do about it? And what we do about it is we create opportunities, new opportunities, by streamlining regulations and focusing tax relief to expand the job base in the community in which it has been affected. And a good way of doing that is to help the small-business owners around this part of the world. And that's what we're going to do.

Thanks, Frank. Good job.

Mr. Piunno. Thank you.

The President. Claire Rosacco. Claire Rosacco is the vice president of public affairs and information with——

Claire Rosacco. Cayahoga Community College.

The President. Cayahoga Community College. Tell us about your community college.

Ms. Rosacco. Cayahoga Community College, as I hope many of you are aware, we also call Tri-C. It's our nickname. And we are the largest and first——

The President. Kind of like W. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Rosacco. We're the largest and first community college in the State of Ohio. We service all of northeast Ohio. And I'm excited to tell you about some new initiatives we have that we think will complement your opportunity zone. We started in this past year what we are calling corporate college, and I hope some of you have heard of corporate college. It's really—[*applause*]—thank you—it is to help all of us hone on our skills for professional development and upscaling our own skills as we go through this new knowledge-based economy.

The President. Yes, can I interrupt you? Sorry.

Ms. Rosacco. Sure.

The President. Obviously, can't stand to have her have the mike the whole time. [*Laughter*] Look, I just want to reflect on what she just said. Jobs change. This is a changing world. The worker training programs must reflect the fact we're in a changing world. Workers need new skills in order to fill the new jobs in a changing world. That's what she's saying.

Go on.

Ms. Rosacco. Thank you. [*Laughter*] We also believe that human development is one of the drivers to help us with economic development, and again, that is what you're getting back to. We work with small, medium, and large companies, and really, we are a lifelong learning institution, as many community colleges are around the country, and that's what makes them so fun to work with and to be a part of. As many of you know, we have

child care centers, so we get the very young. We offer early childhood education. We offer traditional college for the associate's degree. And then we go on to job retraining and training, and we do certification programs. We're one of the largest certification programs in the allied health field in the country. We rank about eighth.

The President. One of the—you know, one of the most unsettling things that happens in a changing economy is a person says, "Oh, no, I don't have the skill set. The job that I can do has changed." It may have left. And Government has the responsibility to help ease those anxieties. And one of the ways to do so is to pay for a person going to community college to learn a new set of skills, and one of the—for example, the health care field she just mentioned, there's a lot of good, high-paying jobs in health care, but there's a skills gap. And the community college system is a great way to provide the skills necessary to fill those jobs.

I met a lot of people around the country who have lost a job, gone back to community college, and made more money after having got an associate's degree at a community college than they did in the last year of their previous job. In other words, skills raise productivity levels, and productivity levels means higher pay, and the community college system is a great place to do that.

I notice you're training people for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Rosacco. Absolutely. We have——

The President. A couple of guitar players. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Rosacco. We support the guitar players. [*Laughter*] We have a great recording arts technology program that is phenomenal, and so we really do support that industry by teaching people all of the electronics that go along with, for instance, producing a CD or producing a video. And we are blessed, because we have some of the finest equipment that our students can work on if they would like to do that. And in fact, we had a student project last year where they produced their own CD with local Cleveland entertainers coming in, and we pressed their CD for them.

The President. Great. I appreciate you coming. But let me say one thing about how community colleges fit into an opportunity zone. There are streams of Federal money; a lot of it is grant driven, formula-driven grants. And a community college in an opportunity zone would be first in line for the money. In other words, there would be an intense focus on Federal funding.

When the strategy is in place, there will be a Federal Government effort, along with State and local governments, to focus resources to help a community which has been affected by changing times rise up and get back on its feet and become a viable, productive part of our national economy. And a community college system and the community college in that opportunity zone will play an integral role.

I want to thank you for coming. I want you to know that I believe community colleges are an integral part of helping people during changing times, and that's why we invited Claire here.

We've got a homebuilder with us today, Rob Myers. There he is. He's an entrepreneur. He's building homes. By the way, the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. It is a hopeful statistic to be able to say, more people are opening up their own door, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property," and we intend to keep it that way—we intend to keep it that way.

Tell us, you know, besides interest rates, tell us what else is on your mind when it comes to building homes. If you've got problems, what are they? If you don't have problems, sit down. [*Laughter*]

Rob Myers. Mr. President, we're about the most overregulated business there must be.

The President. Yes, see, people don't understand this about homebuilding.

Mr. Myers. Every city we work in has their own building code. It's different in every city. Every city requires that we file tax forms for every employee working in that city with that city. So if you've got 5 employees working in 10 different cities, that's 50 local tax forms we've got to fill out just to do one job. It's unbelievable.

The President. Yes. I presume the Federal Government might pile on a little bit too.

Mr. Myers. Well, I don't know how much time you've got here. [*Laughter*] The cost of land is more because the requirements to develop land are just getting higher and higher and higher as we're trying to deal with the paperwork, which is so vague that they can't even define things that are wetlands, which you'd think wetlands should be wet, but a drainage ditch is a wetland today.

The President. Yes. See, here's—what he's talking about is that we've become a regulatory society at all levels of government. And that damages not only the homebuilder, but really it really affects the homebuyer. If it's harder to build something, it makes the product more scarce, and therefore, price goes up. What we're trying to do is reduce price on homes. We want more homes to be built so people have a chance to realize their dream of ownership. And therefore, one of the advantages of an opportunity zone is we're going to say to local folks, "If you want to quality for an opportunity zone to get priority in Federal funding and good tax relief, streamline your regulations."

In other words, before an application is accepted, they've got to listen to people like this good man, Frank—or Rob—Joe—[*laughter*]—Rob, so as to streamline regulations. It makes no sense if you're trying to revitalize a part of the country and the regulatory burden is so heavy that there can't be a plethora of affordable homes. So one of the reasons we asked this good man to come by was to be able to talk about homeownership but, as significantly, is to remind people about the burdens that stand in the way between the homebuilder and the homebuyer, and that's needless regulations at the local, State, and Federal level. Good job.

Joe Goletz. So one of the things that needs to change in a society where people change jobs is the concept of owning your own health care plan. It makes sense in a changing world for people to have a health care plan that they manage, that they own, and that they can take with them from job to job. It's a little different from the way the old health systems were set up, and so one of the things that we did in the Medicare bill was establish what's called health savings accounts. The principle of a health savings account is it says that an individual is in charge of his or her health decisions, that the decisions for health are made between doctor and patient, not by distant bureaucrats.

And so here's—we're going to talk to an owner of a health savings account. These are new. They're necessary. They're going to be really necessary to help small businesses afford health care, and let me let him describe to you how they work.

Joe Goletz. I'll do my best on that. Well, being a small-business owner—I started a business about 2 years ago. That's what caused me to look into other options, pooling with other small businesses, and the medical savings accounts that used to—that preceded the health savings accounts were out there at that time too. But knowing the new law that's coming down beginning the first of this year, we read through it, and it made a whole lot of sense. My wife is a stay-at-home mom with four young kids at home, so this is—this had to be a plan that could cover all of us.

The President. Right.

Mr. Goletz. And it does.

The President. Let me describe how it works, and then you can tell us whether it worked for you.

A health savings account says that somebody will purchase a catastrophic health care plan with a large deductible. So in other words, say it's got a $3,000 deductible associated with the plan, which is less costly than regular insurance, by the way. The family or the person will be covered from $3,000 and above with medical expenses. So the fundamental question is what happens between zero and 3,000. A health savings account says to a small-business owner, small-business employee, sole proprietorship, "You can put money in that aspect of your health savings account tax-free. You earn money within the health savings account tax-free. You can take money out for health reasons tax-free. And if you don't spend all you've got in your account, you roll it over to the next year tax-free." In other words, it says—[*applause*].

So he and his family have got a $5,000 deductible, zero to 5,000. He's responsible, in his case, for the money between zero and $5,000. In other words, if he goes to the doctor's office, he pays for it. If he buys a prescription drug, he pays for it. By the way,

small businesses can set these up, and they can pay for their employees from zero to whatever the deductible is, to the top of the deductible.

Anyway, what was your—give us a sense of savings.

Mr. Goletz. Well, before the plan, we were paying roughly $700 a month for family coverage. And now, we're paying $225 a month. And——

The President. Well, he's saving $475 a month on his insurance, and he's out of pocket from zero to 5,000. But he's putting money in the account tax-free. It's earning money tax-free. And if they don't spend any money this year, it rolls over, so it's a savings account for health purposes. It's a way for somebody to say, "This is my health care plan. I own it for all my life, and I can pass it to my kids for their health care plans as well."

Go ahead.

Mr. Goletz. Just one more thing on that, too, is we didn't have to switch doctors. We were with Cleveland Clinic Doctors, and that was very important to us. And this plan allows us to stay there and do that, so our kids have the same pediatrician, and we have the same doctors. It's been a very good plan for us.

The President. Yes, see, and by the way, just to complete the story, because of the tax relief we passed, this family saved $2,900 in the year '03, and 2,900 in '04, to help him with those health care costs if they arise. Tax relief helps American families.

Thanks for coming.

Where are the Dotsons? Right here in front of me, Julie and Carl Dotson. They're—what do you do?

Carl Dotson. I'm a C&C machinist at Luke Incorporated in Wooster, Ohio.

The President. Fabulous. Julie?

Julie Dotson. I'm a stay-at-home mom.

The President. Very good.

Mrs. Dotson. We have two sons.

The President. Very good. Look at these little guys. The reason I've asked them to come is because a lot of times when we talk about tax relief, you just hear slogans and numbers. And I think it's important to put a face on tax relief so that the people who are deciding whether or not you're going to keep your taxes low actually hear what tax relief means for families.

The tax relief we passed, by the way, reduced all rates. We said, "Let's be fair about it. You pay taxes; you get relief," as opposed to playing politics with tax relief. But we also did some other things. We helped small businesses. We raised the child credit. If you're a mom or dad raising kids, raising the child credit helps. We reduced the marriage penalty. See, the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage.

How much money did you save?

Mrs. Dotson. We saved $2,000.

The President. Yes, see, that's probably not a lot for some of them in Washington. It's only got three zeroes attached to it. [*Laughter*] What did you do with it?

Mrs. Dotson. We used our money to upgrade and renovate our home, to upgrade our plumbing and also to remodel our boys' room to give them a desk and to make their room more conducive to doing their schoolwork.

The President. Yes, that's a good thing, isn't it, guys? You will do your schoolwork, and we're remodeling your room so you'll do so. Did you do the work yourself?

Mrs. Dotson. No, actually, we did part of it ourselves, but we also hired a plumbing contractor to do our plumbing.

The President. Yes, see, here's the way the economy works. We increase demand for a service. Tax relief caused these people to make a decision that enabled a plumbing contractor to find additional work. No telling whether the plumbing contractor needed to expand his job base because of your demand, but nevertheless, money starts moving. See, the role of Government, in my judgment, is to set priorities, fund those priorities, and let people keep as much money as we can, because you can spend your money better than the Federal Government can.

Okay, real quick. That bus is beginning to warm—I can smell its diesel fumes—[*laughter*]—and I've got a little more to say.

One thing, though, is that they're talking about permanency in the Tax Code. You might have heard me say it the other night—if we don't make the tax relief permanent, these people's taxes are going up, and that's a mistake. It affects their family. It affects their planning. It affects their comfort. It will also affect the economy. Congress needs to listen to people like these good folks and

keep that tax relief that we passed permanent.

Before I answer some questions, I do want to talk about how to keep America safer. I just want to give you some principles on which I'm making decisions. First and foremost, you cannot negotiate with the enemy. These people are—you can't hope for the best with them. You cannot sit down and rationalize with them. That's not the way they are. These are people who have adopted an ideology of hatred and used terror to shake our will. They use terror as a tool to try to drive us out of the world and stop the march for freedom. That's just the stakes of the world we live in, and therefore, we must be resolute, firm, never yielding. We must find them in other countries so we do not have to face them here at home.

Secondly, second point is, when the President says something, he better mean it, for the sake of peace and freedom. I just had a couple of things I want to share with you. I said if you—this is a different kind of war. By the way, I never wanted to be the war President. If they would have said, "Here's a list of things that you can be when you're President," it would have been my last choice. This war was brought on us. This war came to our soil. We didn't ask for it. We didn't ask for it, but we'll deal with it. That's the hand—that's what—history has called us to act.

It's a different kind of war. It's a war that—where we've got to find people who are buried in caves and hiding in cities. And therefore, the doctrine that says, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as a terrorist," has been and will continue to be enforced. I said that about the Taliban in Afghanistan. They're no longer in power. America is safer for it because Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for Al Qaida. And the Afghan people are better off, and that counts.

I also told the families of our troops and, more importantly, those who wear our uniform, "When we put you in harm's way, you'll have all the resources you'll need to fight and win the war against the terrorists." Obviously, there's a difference of opinion about that in this campaign.

I went to Congress last September and proposed supplemental funding for our troops in harm's way—body armor, fuel, ammunition, spare parts, equipment that was necessary to uphold the promise to those who wear the uniform and their loved ones that we'll support them in their mission—and we got great bipartisan support. That means Democrats and Republicans voted for this initiative. All but 12 people in the United States Senate voted for the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. Do you know that there was only four United States Senators who voted for the authorization of war but against the funding for our troops in harm's way, and two of those are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, "Well, why did you make this decision?" He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." And then they kept pressing him, and he finally ended up saying it was a complicated matter. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Third point—two more points—2½ more points, and I'm going to answer your questions. When we see a threat, we must deal with it before it materializes, before it comes to hurt us. That's a lesson of September the 11th. It's a vital, vital lesson that our country must never forget.

The world changed on that day. You see, we used to see threats prior to September the 11th and say, "We might deal with it. We may not deal with it, but surely it's not going to come to harm us here at home." And that all changed, and it's really important for people to understand the consequences of what happened on September the 11th. I understand it.

And that's why, when I saw a threat with Saddam Hussein, I went to the Congress and said, "There's a threat." They understood it. They looked at the same intelligence I did, and they remembered the same history of this guy. He's an enemy of America. He used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He killed thousands of own citizens. That's the definition of a threat. And Congress looked at that intelligence and said, "Yes, Mr. President, we agree with you. He's a threat." And

they authorized the use of force. My opponent voted yes when it came time to authorizing the use of force. He looked at the very same intelligence I did and came to the same conclusion I did.

The last choice of a Commander in Chief is to put his troops—put the troops in harm's way. So I went to the United Nations. We tried diplomacy to deal with the threat before it fully materialized. The U.N. Security Council voted overwhelmingly to say to Saddam, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." He wasn't about to listen. As he had for over a decade, he just—he ignored the demands of the free world. They sent inspectors into his country, and we knew that he was systematically deceiving the inspectors. Why would you do that?

And so I have a choice to make at this time in our history. As I told them the other night, it's a choice that only comes to the Oval Office. It's a choice no President wants to make but better be ready to make. And I made the choice to remove Saddam Hussein from power because I remembered the lessons of September the 11th. I knew he was a madman. I knew we couldn't trust his word. And I knew my most solemn duty was to defend the American people. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America is safer with Saddam Hussein in a prison cell.

Finally, one other point, and I'm going to answer some questions. One final point really quickly, and it's important you know this about me: I believe that liberty can transform nations. I believe that liberty has got the power of helping the world be peaceful. I believe that freedom can convert enemies into allies. I believe that freedom is how you promote peace. That's what I believe. And so long as I'm your President, I will strongly believe that.

I believe it for a couple of reasons. I believe it because I've had conversations with the heads of—head of a country who was—which was a former enemy, Prime Minister Koizumi. Sixty years ago or so, my dad and your dads were at war with Japan. They were a sworn enemy. A lot of blood was spilled over that war. And yet today, 60 years—it seems like a long time if you're 58 years old like me, but it's not so long in the march of history—60 years later, I'm sitting down at the table with this man, talking about keeping the peace. Liberty has transformed Japan into—an enemy into an ally. It's a powerful force in history.

Liberty and freedom are powerful. They're powerful. I believe every heart longs for liberty. I think it's wrong to condemn people to tyranny. I don't think it upholds the ideals of our country to say, "Certain people can be free, and other people can't be free. Certain people want to be free, and other people don't want to be free." I believe everybody wants to be free, because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world; that's what I believe. [*Applause*] Okay, I've got some more work to do here. Thank you all.

But what I'm telling you is, we've done the hard work, and now we can see a peaceful world coming our way. I long for peace, and I know you do as well. We've done the hard work to defend our country, and by staying firm and resolved, this world is going to be more peaceful for our kids and grandkids. It's the legacy we'll leave behind, a legacy of a freer world and a more peaceful world.

Now, let me answer some questions from you, and then I'm going to head on the bus, up the road, shaking those hands and kissing those babies. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Salute to the President

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. I can tell you're a veteran. Thank you for your service.

Q. Thank you.

The President. I may even be able to guess the branch of service.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm also the proud father of a Navy pilot who flew in Operation Iraqi Freedom for 10 months.

The President. There you go. What carrier?

Q. He was flying off with the *Abraham Lincoln*.

The President. Yes.

Q. And on behalf of my son, I was wondering if you would permit me the honor of giving our Commander in Chief a real Navy salute and not a flip-flop.

The President. God bless you. Thank you. That's great. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

Okay, yes, sir, you got a question? Thank you, made my morning. Tell your son thanks.

Jobs/President's Legacy

Q. Mr. President, I have a comment and a question. My comment is that since last summer, my company, Ohio Cat, which is headquartered here in Broadview Heights, has added 100 jobs.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And those jobs are union jobs, non-union jobs, hourly, salary, and they're throughout Ohio. So I'm proud of that, and I think you can be too.

The President. I am proud of that, thanks.

Q. As you look backwards and forwards over your two administrations, what do you see as your most important legacy to the American people?

The President. Yes, thank you. Peace; that after 8 years of a Presidency, the country is more secure, and the world is a more peaceful place. There will be more countries that understand the great value of unleashing the hopes and aspirations of their own people.

See, the foreign policy of the country for a while had been, let's just hope for the best in the Middle East, that they really don't care for freedom, that stability is what is important. But underneath what appeared to be a stable environment was brewing resentment. And the long-run solution in dealing with these ideologues who have got a really dark vision of the world is to spread the light of freedom, is to hold up the hopes and aspirations of its people.

And we're making progress. Remember, Afghanistan is now heading to freedom. Iraq is becoming free. That will serve as a powerful example for other countries in the neighborhood. My hope and dreams are that the Palestinians shirk leadership that had denied the—this kind of path to free democracy and find reformers, young reformers who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people so that a free and peaceful society can coexist with Israel. I think that would be a great legacy, of moving liberty to—around the world.

At home, the legacy will be that the school systems responded and challenged that soft bigotry of low expectation and raised the bars and standards, corrected problems early before they're too late, and made sure that every child has a chance to realize his or her dreams. I can't think of a better legacy than a school system which responds to the deepest desire of every parent that his or her child has a chance to realize the promise of America.

As well I think it's very important for our society to be a society based upon personal responsibility, that each of us must be responsible for the decisions we make in life.

Let's see. Let me get this lady here and then you. Yes, ma'am.

Voting for the President

Q. When I vote for President, I'm voting for the man that I'm willing to leave my children and my grandchildren to. And I just want to say that I'm proud that I'm going to be voting for you.

The President. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that.

You got a question? You're next. Be thinking of a question. [*Laughter*]

Tax Reform

Q. I was hoping you could comment on some of the tax reform you're referring to, as it applies to revising the IRS and maybe even going as far as looking at a flat tax.

The President. No, I appreciate that. One of the antiquated parts of our society is the Tax Code. It's complicated. It's full of loopholes, and I believe it needs to be simplified. I know that Senator Voinovich—needs to be simplified. When I said it in my convention speech, I thought he was going to fly right up on the stage and give me a hug. I was hoping he wouldn't. [*Laughter*] But we've talked about this before.

And we're going to bring Republicans and Democrats together. I'm not going to prejudge the outcome. It's certainly one option. I've been asked in a variety of venues, "Are you in favor of the sales tax? Are you in favor of the flat tax?" What I'm in favor of is changing the Tax Code to make it easier to understand and more simple. I think by simplifying the code, we will encourage economic growth. A complex code that is hard to understand and requires enormous amounts of

paperwork and time and lawyers and accountants is really counterproductive to economic growth.

So it's going to be important for me not to prejudge the outcome, but I am not going to prejudge—I will not hold back in saying that I'm adamant about bringing these people together and to present a plan to the Congress that will make it easier for you to fill out your taxes and make it easier for you to realize the system is fair. And that's the best thing we can do with tax relief.

Yes, ma'am.

Broccoli

Q. Do you like broccoli?

The President. Do I like broccoli? It's okay. I'm not nearly as turned off by it as my dad is. [*Laughter*] If you really want to get into it, I kind of like the top of the broccoli. [*Laughter*] I don't like the stalk itself—not that good.

Yes.

2004 Election/Afghanistan

Q. What can we do in the next 60 days to ensure that you win Ohio and get reelected?

The President. Yes, thank you, sir. I was hoping he'd ask that question. That's the kind of question I was hoping to get. [*Laughter*] First, register people to vote. It's—we have a duty to vote. Did I tell you—talk about the 10 million people in Afghanistan today yet? No. Okay. It's hard to believe, isn't it? Ten million people in Afghanistan have registered to vote. It's amazing—it's amazing, isn't it? Really think about that. Prior to September the 11th, 2001, these people were living in the—well, prior to later on in 2001, they were still living in the clutches of the Taliban. These barbaric people would not let young girls go to school. They would whip their mothers in the public square if they didn't toe their dark vision of Islam, you know, toe the line. They were the opposite of the kind of people we are in America. We respect human rights. We respect human dignity. We value the freedom to worship the way you want to. They're the opposite, and yet, 3 years later, people are lining up to vote, 10 million people. This is in spite of the fact that the Taliban is jerking people off a bus and executing them because they're holding registration cards or they were workers trying to get people to register. You cannot stop liberty. It's a powerful force. People want to be free.

Now, the reason I bring that up is, we shouldn't take that liberty for granted in our country, and we have a duty to vote. And I would ask you to find friends and neighbors and register them to vote: Republicans, independents, discerning Democrats, like Zell Miller, for example.

Secondly, talk up the campaign. Get on the web page, georgewbush.com, and if you've got questions about issues, if you've got questions about this agenda I laid out last Thursday night, read up on it. And then talk to a friend or neighbor and say, "Here's what he believes. Here's why I believe America will be a more—a safe place and a hopeful place under 4 more years of George Bush. Here's the specific agenda item." If you get stuck, just tell them he's the kind of guy who does in office what he said he was going to do on the campaign trail. You might remind them that I—anyway.

And then, come election time, help find people and turn them out. This is a matter of encouraging people to vote and then seeing to it that they do vote. It's really important. It's called grassroots politics. And I want to thank you for asking that question. I was supposed to say that right off the bat. [*Laughter*]

Let's see, a couple of more. Yes, sir.

Philosophical Differences in the 2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, thank you for your leadership, first of all. Can you highlight the stark difference between the policies of Kerry's camp versus yours with respect to the individual psyche? It's clear that the economic policies of, "We'll take care of you because you can't take care of yourself"——

The President. Right.

Q. ——are much different from yours, which is, "We'll create an environment to support you as an individual," not to mention the right-to-life issue, which doesn't value the individual in the womb.

The President. Right, yes. Let me talk about that. There is a—we have a philosophical difference. I believe that Government ought to unleash the creative talents of the American people, ought to stand by people, that we need to transform the systems of Government so as to help people realize their dreams. In other words, that's why health savings accounts are important. That's why, in the Medicare reform, seniors were given more choices. That's why, on the education reform, we raised standards. We said, "You measure, but correct problems early before they're too late. If not, give parents additional options." That's why we, on the tax relief, said that you can spend your money far wiser than the Federal Government can.

In other words, it's the philosophy that drives much of what we're doing, as opposed to a philosophy that says, "Here's another program"—like on health care—"Here's a program that will empower the Federal Government. The Federal Government will decide this. The Federal Government will decide that. The Federal Government will make this decision," as if the people can't decide for themselves as to what's best for them.

And so it's a—I like to put it this way. My opponent is for expanding the role of the Federal Government; we are for expanding opportunity for individuals. And I look forward to the philosophical debate.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge/Energy Policy

Q. Ohio loves you. I had to say that.

The President. Thank you. I accept that.

Q. I support drilling in ANWR, and I just wanted to know what your position is on that.

The President. Yes, I appreciate that very much. The question is whether or not we should explore for much-needed reserves in what's called ANWR, which is a part of Alaska. I believe we should, and I know we can do so in environmentally friendly ways. Let me explain it to you now so you understand—that the drilling area would be the size of an airport in Cleveland, Ohio. In other words, it would be on what would be like your airport, and the rest of the entire area here would have no exploration at all. In other words, the pad, the place at which they would place the equipment to drill for much-needed crude oil and natural gas, would be the size of the airport region here inside your entire county. It's a very small part of the world.

Secondly, I know we can do it in environmentally friendly ways.

Thirdly, it's important. They say that had we been exploring there a decade ago, we'd have an additional million barrels of oil coming into our country. That is necessary when we're in a world of tight supply. In other words, there's—the demand for energy has gone up primarily because of China's growth. And the supplies of crude around the world are not keeping up with demand. And so if you're dependent on foreign sources of energy, like we are, you get affected at the gas pump. That additional million barrels of oil a day would have affected world price and would have helped America become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

People are concerned as to whether or not we can explore without ruining the environment. I believe we can. I believe we can do so. I know we have the technology available.

Now, there are—listen, I've said we shouldn't be exploring off the coast of California. I meant it. There are some parts of Florida where we'll not explore. But there are some places where, in this country, where there's ample reserves, we can do so without endangering the environment. And it's a rational policy based upon the realities of the 21st century.

George and I have talked about this before. I think one of the things we ought to do is to expand nuclear power in America. We can do so with new technologies. We can do so in a way that improves the quality of our air, and it certainly makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I know we need to continue to explore clean coal technologies, and we're doing that. We've got ample money in our budget so that we can use coal in environmentally friendly ways. We're using more ethanol than ever before, and that makes sense. It seems like to me that we ought to be using our great research and development capacities to expand ways to be able to use soybeans and corn as energy sources. Nothing better than some President sitting down some day, and

they come in with the crop report, and they say, "Corn is up. We got more bushels than ever before, and therefore, we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

I know we can encourage more conservation, and we do so. I fully believe that we're in a period of transition here in America, and that technology is going to solve much of our energy needs. And that's why we've got ample research and development in our budgets to look for different ways in which we can use hydrocarbons or not even use hydrocarbons at all. And one such initiative is the hydrogen-powered automobile. We believe we're less than a decade away from getting that on the market, which will change the whole nature of how we travel in America. We'll be able to meet the consumer demands, and at the same time become less dependent on energy.

Thank you for asking a simple question with a long, complicated answer.

Last question. Yes, ma'am. And then we're going to get on the bus.

Military Absentee Ballots/Service to America

Q. Yes, Mr. President. My grandson is serving as a U.S. Marine in the Middle East. And if I heard correctly, the last election, some of their votes weren't counted.

The President. Yes.

Q. The military—are they going to be counted this year?

The President. As far as I'm concerned, they will be. I appreciate you saying that. It's—I think that, yes, I think they're going to be counted. I certainly hope so. We learned some lessons in the last campaign that we've got to be—that we needed election reforms. We passed good law to encourage good, honest elections and to make sure that the registrations are good and honest, to make sure that every ballot is counted. And I'm confident that there will be a greater awareness when it comes to counting these ballots.

I want you to—where is he?

Q. [*Inaudible*]—don't know——

The President. Okay, good. Well, you're not supposed to know then, if you don't know. [*Laughter*] And I'm not going to tell you. No, I don't—[*laughter*]—I don't know either. But find him and tell him the Commander in Chief is incredibly proud of his service. He's serving in historic times.

Okay, one more thing, yes.

Q. We haven't heard from him in around 7 to 8 weeks, so we're really concerned.

The President. Yes. Well, maybe you ought to just give us his name. Give it to that ugly-looking guy right there—[*laughter*]—Todd. Yes, he'll be fine.

I mean, look, for those of you who've got a loved one in harm's way, they're serving in historic times. This world is changing. It's changing because the United States of America is leading. We're leading because of our own self-interest. We're leading because we've got a duty, and that's to secure the homeland. It's a solemn duty of protecting the American people. But we're also leading because we love liberty.

We have no desire to occupy territory. We're not interested in conquering anybody. We're interested in protecting ourselves in the short run by finding these people where they hide, disrupting their plans, bringing them to justice. And we're interested in securing ourselves in the long run, because we know the power of liberty can transform societies to be peaceful and hopeful societies.

Your son, grandson—grandson?—grandson is serving in historic times. Sometime—I fully believe this—he'll look back and say to his grandkids, "You know, I had the honor of serving America during this time of transition, and the world is better for what I did."

God bless you all. Thanks for coming. I appreciate it. On to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:58 a.m. at Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School. In his remarks, he referred to Janet Voinovich, wife of Senator George Voinovich; Brian D. Wilch, principal, Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School; Mayor Glenn R. Goodwin of Broadview Heights, OH; Mayor Jerry N. Hruby of Brecksville, OH; former professional baseball player Michael Hargrove; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Todd Beyer, Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Advance.

The President's Radio Address

September 4, 2004

Good morning. America is the home to the most dedicated, innovative, and decent workers in the world. And thanks to their effort and enterprise, America's economy is strong and growing stronger.

This past week we learned that we added 144,000 new jobs in August and nearly 60,000 more jobs in June and July than previously estimated. Overall, we've added about 1.7 million new jobs since last August. And the unemployment rate has fallen to 5.4 percent, nearly a full point below the peak last summer and lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Our Nation is proud of all our workers, and on this Labor Day weekend, we say thank you.

The world is changing dramatically for American workers. The global market is expanding, creating new markets for our goods and new competition for our people. Workers are changing jobs more often, and they need new skills to stay ahead. This time of change can be a time of great opportunity for American workers, and Government must take their side.

To create more jobs in America, we must make sure that America remains the best place in the world to do business. That starts with encouraging investment and expansion by restraining Federal spending, reducing regulation, and making tax relief permanent. We also need to make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy, to expand trade, and to level the playing field for American goods and services across the globe. And we must protect workers and small-business owners from the frivolous lawsuits that threaten jobs across America.

Another drag on our economy is the Tax Code, which is a complicated mess filled with special interest loopholes and saddling our people with more than 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year. American workers and their families deserve a simpler, fairer, progrowth system, so I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

In this time of change, many workers want to go back to school to learn new or different skills, so we will double the number of people served by our principal job training program and increase funding for our community colleges. We will change outdated labor laws to make the workplace more family-friendly and give workers more control over their schedules through comp-time and flex-time.

I also have a plan to create American opportunity zones to help communities that have lost manufacturing, textile, and other jobs. In these areas we'll provide tax relief, investment incentives, and regulatory relief specifically designed to attract new businesses and create new jobs. We will also improve housing, job training, and education in opportunity zones so these communities in transition have all the resources they need to succeed.

We'll also work to build an ownership society in America. Our Nation is stronger when more people own their homes, their own health plans, and a piece of their retirement. We will strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal account, a nest egg they can call their own and Government can never take away.

With all these proposals, we'll provide American workers with a path to greater opportunity, more freedom, and more control over their lives.

American workers built this country, and they continue to build our prosperity today. They have our gratitude and our confidence. And all Americans have my best wishes for a safe and enjoyable Labor Day weekend.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:25 p.m. on September 3 at the Crowne Plaza Five Seasons Hotel in Cedar Rapids, IA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Kirtland, Ohio

September 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Listen, there's nothing better than taking a Saturday

bus ride with your family—[*laughter*]—especially in Ohio. Thanks for coming out today. It's great to be in Lake County. I appreciate so many people turning out. It looks like Lake County and Ohio is Bush-Cheney country.

I believe you got to get out with the people and ask for the vote, and that's what we're doing today. I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife. She is a terrific First Lady for the United States.

And I'm so proud of Barbara and Jenna. I really appreciate them coming out on the campaign trail with us today. Campaigning like this is kind of like going on the family camping trip—[*laughter*]—I promised, but never took them on. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate my friend Steve LaTourette. He's a great United States Congressman. You need to put him back into office. And while you're putting me back in and putting him back in, put George Voinovich back in as well. I appreciate you being here, Senator. I also appreciate Senator Mike DeWine and his daughter Alice joining us today. Michael, thank you for coming. Congressman Ralph Regula from Ohio is on the bus trip with us today. Thanks for being here, Ralph.

I appreciate Mayor David Anderson coming today. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I want to thank the Sonny Burgess Band for coming today.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank you for setting up such a fantastic rally. I appreciate your hard work. I appreciate what you've done and what you're going to do. I'm here to ask you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. We have a duty in this country to vote. Remind your citizens—your fellow citizens to do their duty. And when you're registering voters, register independents and discerning Democrats. You heard Zell Miller the other night. He represents a lot of folks who understand that with 4 more years, Dick Cheney and I will make this country safer, stronger, and better.

We're approaching an historic national election, and the time for choosing is getting closer. I'm looking forward to campaigning in your State. You've got a great State full of great people. I'm looking forward to talking about the records we've built, the convictions we hold, and the vision that guides us forward. I fully understand a Presidential contest is a contest over the future. And so as I travel your State, I'll tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I'll lead this country for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. And that's why we passed the most important Federal election reform in history. We are challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising standards. We're using accountability system to figure out who needs help early, before it's too late. We believe in local control of schools. We know reading is the new civil right. We're making progress in America. The achievement gap is closing, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. That's why I brought Republicans and Democrats together. Seniors now get immediate help buying medicine. Soon, every senior will be able to get prescription drug coverage, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers, and ranchers, and that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. Because we acted, our economy is growing. Yesterday we received the jobs report for August. It shows that our economy is strong and getting stronger. We added 144,000 new jobs last month, including 22,000 new jobs in manufacturing. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since last August, a year ago last August. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That is a full point below last summer. It is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. There's more work to be done here in the State of Ohio. I understand there's people looking for work and can't find a job. We will not rest until they do find a job.

We're making progress, and we're not turning back.

I believe the job of the President is to confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership. And that is why, with your help, we're going to carry Ohio and win a great national victory in November.

One of the things I talked about the other night in New York was how this world of ours is changing. People are changing jobs. Women are working not only inside the house but now outside of the house as well. It's a different world from the world of our parents and grandparents, yet most of the fundamental systems of our country haven't changed. The Tax Code, the health coverage, the pension plans, the worker training were created for the world of yesterday, not for tomorrow. We're going to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue your dreams.

Any good plan starts with making sure people can find work. Any good plan makes sure that we expand hope and opportunity with a growing economy. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create jobs in America, Congress must get my energy plan to my desk so we become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To create more jobs in America, we must open up markets around the world for U.S. goods and services. We open up our markets—my message to other countries like China is, "You open up yours." We can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, so long as the rules are fair. To create more jobs in America, we must get rid of these junk lawsuits that threaten our small-business owners. To create more jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money.

See, I believe Government can set priorities and fund those priorities and let you keep more of your own money. My philosophy says, "We're good at some things, but once we fund those things, you can spend your money far better than the Federal Government can."

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. And there we have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over $2 trillion of new Federal programs if he's elected.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's a lot. That's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. So they asked him the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said that old line we've heard before, "Oh, don't worry, we'll pay for it by taxing the rich." We have heard that line before. First of all, you can't raise enough money to pay for all those programs by taxing the rich, and secondly, you know how it works. They get accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him. We're going to carry Ohio and the country.

Thank you all for being here. I appreciate you coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Today, a little earlier, I talked about creating what's called American opportunity zones. These will help communities recovering from lost manufacturing, textile, and other jobs. For example, an area like greater Cleveland will be able to apply for tax relief and investment incentives and regulatory relief, specifically designed to attract new businesses and new jobs.

Another drag on our economy is the Federal Tax Code. Yes, that Tax Code is a complicated mess. It's filled with special interest loopholes. You realize it takes 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year to comply with the Tax Code. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

In a new term, we'll help our workers by expanding access to community colleges so they can gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Let me tell you what else we need to do. In a time of change, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. That's the realities of the 21st century. Yet one in four of our students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants to low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college education.

In changing times, we've got to do more to make quality health care available and affordable. One-half of all the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. So in a new term, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies get.

We're going to offer tax credits to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts. In a new term, I'll ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center. And to make sure we improve health care for you in Lake County, we've got to get rid of these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running your docs out of practice. We've got a national problem when it comes to these frivolous lawsuits. I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, and pro-patient, and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

In changing times, there's nothing like owning something to bring stability to your life. We're going to continue to promote homeownership in America. The homeownership rate in our country is at an alltime high. Nothing better than knowing more people are opening the door to their house and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well if you're a younger worker, you better look at that Social Security system very seriously. Older guys like me are just fine when it comes to Social Security. But the fiscal solvency of Social Security is in doubt, if you're a younger worker. We'll strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal savings account, an account they call their own, an account they can pass on from one generation to the next.

In this world of change, there are some things that do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that bring us stability must not change, our families, religious congregations. They deserve our support. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We believe religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, and our Government must never discriminate against them. Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges. I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Our strategy is clear. We are defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We are working to advance liberty in the broader Middle East because freedom will bring hope and the peace we all want. By being resolute and strong, we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned its attacks. Because we acted, today, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more then three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions, and the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. Remember, he subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He harbored Abu Nidal and his organization. He let Zarqawi run free in Baghdad, and his crowd. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

And so I went to the United States Congress. I saw a threat, and I said to the Congress, "Do you see a threat?" And members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at and came to the same conclusion we came to. And they authorized force, including my opponent. He looked at the same intelligence. He came to the same conclusion. And when they said on the Floor of Congress, "Do you vote to authorize the use of force," he said, "I do."

The last commitment of the Commander in Chief has got to be to put troops in combat. The first commitment has got to be to try to resolve problems diplomatically. And so I went to the United Nations. I said to that body, I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence we had looked at and again concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. They passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The free world had spoken. But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. He wasn't about to listen to the collective voice of the world. As a matter of fact, he deceived inspectors that were sent into his country.

So I had a choice to make. It's the kind of choice that only comes to the Oval Office. It's the kind of decision no President would ask for but must be prepared to make. The decision was: Do I trust a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people have been liberated. Think about this, young women, young girls could not go to school in Afghanistan under the Taliban. Their mothers were whipped in the public squares. Yet, because we acted, we're not only more secure, but 10 million people have registered to vote for the upcoming Presidential election in October. Iraq has got a strong Prime Minister and National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. The world is changing. Freedom is on the march.

We're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. We're also doing so because we're serving a historic cause that will make our country safer. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies, which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. Free societies change people. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. That helps us keep the peace.

Our mission in those countries are clear. We'll help new leaders train their army so they can do the hard work of defending themselves against a few who want to deny the hopes of the many. We will help those countries head toward elections. We will help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a fabulous United States military full of decent, honorable, and courageous people. I want to thank the veterans

who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

I made a pledge to those who wear the uniform and their families, we'd give them all they need so they can do their job. And that's why I went to the Congress last September, proposed—and the Congress overwhelmingly passed—$87 billion of funding needed for our troops for body armor and fuel, spare parts, ammunition, hazard pay, health benefits, all that's necessary to support them in their missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I was pleased that we received strong bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, it was so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. Two of them are my runningmate and his—my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him why, and he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." That's a——

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. I bet you they don't speak that way on the town square in the cities here in Lake County. They pressed him further, and he said he's proud of the vote. Then he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work with our friends and allies in the cause of freedom and peace. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I'm proud of their contributions. I appreciate working with the leaders of those countries for making us all more secure. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's what I believe. I believe the wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I've been spending time with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We sit at a table and discuss a lot of things, and one of the most important things we discuss is peace. Think about that. It wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that my dad and your dads or granddads were fighting Japan in a brutal war. They were our enemy. And here today, because my predecessor and others believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally, because they stood strong in the face of the skeptics, because they believed that freedom is the deepest desire of every human heart, that Japan is a democracy and an ally. And here I am talking about the peace, talking about North Korea, how to make it work on the peaceful peninsula, talking about Iraq, talking about how to bring terrorists to justice. Some day an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace, and our children and grandchildren will be better off.

I believe millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given a chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things, not because freedom is America's gift to the world but because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

I believe that the 21st century will be the century of liberty. By promoting freedom here at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this land. We'll pass the enduring values on to another generation. We'll continue to lead the world in the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep abiding faith in the values that make this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. I'll never forget those workers in hardhats at the top of their lungs yelling at

me, "Whatever it takes." I remember shaking hands with people who just came out of the rubble, the firefighters and the police who set such an incredibly powerful example for bravery and courage and compassion all across the country. The guy looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." And since that day, I wake up thinking about how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State and asked for the vote, I made a pledge. I pledged that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at noon at Lake Farmpark. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor David E. Anderson of Willoughby, OH; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Erie, Pennsylvania

September 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here. I appreciate you all coming out. There's nothing better than taking a bus trip on a Saturday with your family. [*Laughter*] Nothing better than ending the bus trip in Erie, Pennsylvania.

I'm so honored so many came out to say hello. Thank you. I'm here to ask for the vote. I believe it's important to get out amongst the people, tell them what's on your mind. And that's what I'm here to do. But perhaps—I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. Laura is a great mom, a great wife, and a great First Lady. I'm proud of the job she's doing. I'm also proud of our daughters, Barbara and Jenna. Thank you for coming.

I'm proud of my runningmate too. I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I admit he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because of his sound judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

It's good to be in old Tom Ridge's hometown. He's a good friend. He's a good man, and he's doing a heck of a good job in reorganizing the Department of Homeland Security. Thank you for raising him the right way. [*Laughter*]

Glad to be here with Senator Arlen Specter. I hope you put him back in the United States Senate. He's a good friend. I'm looking forward to working with him just like I look forward to working with Rick Santorum, the other Senator.

I'm proud to be in the district of another friend, Phil English, Congressman Phil English. Thought he'd have got a better seat. [*Laughter*] And Congressman John Peterson is with us as well. Thank you for coming, John. I appreciate you being here.

Jean Craige Pepper too—she's running for treasurer of the State of Pennsylvania. My friend Jane Earll is with us today from right here in Erie. John Evans is with us.

I want to thank all the other State and local officials who are here. Thanks for serving your State and your community. I thank my friend John Connolly, the country music singer, for being here today. I appreciate him coming. Most of all, thank you all for taking time out of your Saturday to come by and say hello. I appreciate you being here. It means an awful lot. Somebody said, "Well, maybe a couple hundred will show up to say hi." [*Laughter*]

I'm here also to ask for your help. I know many of you are involved in grassroots politics, which means putting up the signs or making the phone calls. I want to thank you for that, and I want to thank you for what you're going to do as we come down the stretch run here. I urge you to encourage your friends and neighbors to vote. We have a duty in this country to participate in the democratic process, to register people, convince people that we have an obligation in a free society to exercise our will at the ballot box. And when you're registering people,

make sure you register independents and discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller. And when you get them headed toward the polls, remind them 4 more years of George Bush and Dick Cheney will make this country safer, stronger, and better.

Over the next 2 months, I'm going to spend a lot of time here in Pennsylvania. Now, I know what the pundits say, but let me tell you something. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we're going to carry this great State. I'm going to tell you where I stand. I'm going to tell you what I believe, and I'm going to tell you where I'm going to lead this country for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. We're making progress. We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising standards. We're testing so we can solve problems early, before they're too late. We're empowering local people to make the right decisions for their schools, and the minority gap is closing in America. We're on our way to excellence for every child, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to provide good health care for our seniors. You might remember the old debate on Medicare. They called it "Mediscare." But I went to Washington to make sure that we provided good health for our seniors. See, the old system, we'd pay $100,000 for heart surgery but not the medicine necessary to see to it that the heart surgery wasn't necessary. It didn't make any sense for you, the taxpayers. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. Starting in 2006, seniors will get prescription drug coverage in Medicare.

I believe in the energy and the innovative spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers, and ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation. Because we acted, our economy is growing. Last—the jobs report yesterday showed that we increased jobs by 144,000 in the month of August. And when you couple that with the upward revisions of the two previous months, we added 200,000 new jobs, which is 1.7 million since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, 1 percent lower than last summer. The national unemployment rate is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Our economic recovery plan is working.

I believe I have the duty as your President to lead. A President must confront problems, not pass them on to future generations or future Presidents. I believe the most solemn duty of the President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

I have a positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a philosophy called compassionate conservatism. It says that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I also understand the world we're living in is changing. People are changing jobs and careers. Years ago when our fathers and grandfathers were in the workplace, it was mainly men working. Today, women are occupying a lot of the important jobs in America. This is a changing world we live in. And yet—I want you to hear this—our most fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. We will transform these systems so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue your own dreams.

Any good plan means we've got to keep growing our economy, and I've got a plan to do that. To keep jobs here in America, Congress needs to get an energy plan to my desk so we can become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here in America, we must open up markets overseas. Listen, our markets are open, and it's good for you as a consumer. See, when you have more choices to choose from, you're likely to get a product that you like at a good price. And so I've told countries like China and elsewhere, "You treat us the way we treat you." American workers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

To keep jobs here, we've got to get rid of these junk lawsuits that are threatening our small-business owners in America. To keep jobs here, I propose what's called opportunity zones to help places like Erie,

where you've lost manufacturing jobs, to be able to apply for tax relief and investment incentives and regulatory relief, all specifically designed to attract new businesses and new jobs. To keep jobs here, we must be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low.

Running up the taxes on American workers and American small businesses is bad economic policy. And we have a difference in this campaign about taxes. I'm running against a fellow who's proposed already $2 trillion of new programs, see. And so they said to him, they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Oh, that's easy. We'll just tax the rich." The problem is we've heard that before, haven't we? Yes. You know what happens. They hire accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him get away with it. We're going to carry Pennsylvania and the country in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Let me tell you what else needs to change. Our Tax Code needs to change. It's a complicated mess. Americans spend 6 billion hours on paperwork and headache when it comes to this Tax Code. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I will bring Democrats and Republicans together to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

We'll make sure our workers have got the skills for the 21st century jobs. That's why we're going to expand access to our community colleges. We'll make sure we're able to—make sure the kids of this country are able to be able to compete in a competitive world. Listen, most new jobs are filled by people who have been to college for 2 years. That's the reality of the world we live in, yet one in four of our students gets there. That's why in our high schools we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll expand math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income Americans, we will help more Americans start their career with a college degree.

In changing times, we've got to make sure health care is available and affordable. Most of the uninsured in America—about 50 percent of the uninsured are small-business employees. These small businesses are having trouble affording health care. In the new term, we must allow small businesses to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to get.

We'll expand health savings accounts to help our workers and small businesses. We'll expand community and rural health centers to poor counties all across America. We will improve health care, but as we do so, we'll make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

There's another big issue in this campaign as far as health care. There are too many frivolous lawsuits that are running up the costs of your health care and running good docs out of business. You've got a problem here in Pennsylvania with medical liability, and we've got a problem around the Nation. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

In a changing world, if you own something, you can bring stability to your life. One of the most hopeful statistics of the modern age is the fact that the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. More minorities own a home than ever before in our country. More people are opening up their doors saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to expand homeownership.

I want to talk about one other aspect of ownership that's important, and that's Social Security. If you're an older citizen today, nothing's going to change for Social Security. You're in good shape. If you're a baby boomer like me, the Social Security trust will take care of us. But if you're a younger worker, you better listen carefully to the debate on Social Security. I believe to make sure the Social Security system is around for younger

workers, they should be able to save some of their own taxes in a personal account that they can call their own, that Government cannot take away.

Now, this is a changing world. We've got plans to stand side by side with the people and the families of America so they can realize their dreams. But in a changing world, some things won't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a changing world, we must support the institutions that give us purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We support marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We support our religious charities that provide a safety net of mercy and compassion. Our Government must never discriminate against faith-based programs. And I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will advance liberty in the broader Middle East because freedom will bring a future of hope and the peace we all long for. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions, and the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's history of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, this country must think differently. After that horrible day, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress, and members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history that I remembered, and came to the same conclusion that my administration had come to: He was a threat. My opponent looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion and voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into combat, we must try all means to solve a problem. That's why I went to the United Nations, in the hope that diplomacy would work. The United Nations Security Council looked at the same intelligence we looked at, remembered the history we remembered, came to the same conclusion that we came to: Saddam was a threat. And they pass a resolution that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." In other words, the free world, after more than a decade of diplomacy, gave Saddam Hussein another chance, a final chance, to meet his responsibilities.

But as he had for over a decade, he wasn't interested in what the free world said. He ignored resolution after resolution after resolution. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived them.

So I had a choice to make, the only—the kind of choice that comes to the Oval Office,

a choice no President wants to make but better be prepared to make. And the choice was this: Do I trust the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted—because we acted to defend our country, more than 50 million people have been liberated. Because we acted in our own self-interest, democracy is now on the march * in the greater Middle East. Think about this. In Afghanistan, 10 million citizens have registered to vote in a Presidential election which will take place next month. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January.

We're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq because when America gives its word, it must keep its word. As well we're serving a vital and historic cause that will make us safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. And that helps us keep the peace.

So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We will help the new leaders train their armies so they can stop the few who are trying to prevent the many from living in a free society. We will move toward elections. We will help those countries get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We have a great military. Our military is full of courageous and decent and honorable people. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for setting such a great example for those who serve. We will make sure our troops have all that is necessary to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress last September and proposed fundamental—supplemental funding, which is money for armor and spare * parts and ammunition and fuel—necessary, money necessary so they can do their work. And we received great bipartisan support. That means both Democrats and Republicans supported it—except for 12 Members of the United States Senate voted no.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And two of those were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him to explain his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they said—they kept pressing, and he said he was proud of his vote. And finally he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Our allies know the historic work we're doing. We've put together a broad coalition; nearly 40 countries in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq are working with us to bring peace to the world. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work to build our alliances. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's what I believe. The wisest use of America's strength is to advance freedom. I like to tell the story about my discussions with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We sit around the table, and we talk about peace. It's an amazing conversation, when you think about it. Wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that my dad and your dads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy. And yet, because my predecessor, citizens of this great country believed that liberty could transform enemies into allies, we worked with the Japanese after World War II to build a democracy, a self-governing nation. Someday, if we're strong and resolute and keep faith in our beliefs, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about the peace, talking about security.

* White House correction.

I believe that America is called to lead the cause of freedom in this new century. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The 21st century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work hard to reform systems that need to be changed so the American people can realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our Nation on to a young generation. We'll continue to lead the world to make the world more free and peaceful.

You know, for these years—for all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

Four years ago—well, none of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console people as best I could. A guy grabbed me by the arm and he said, "Do not let me down." I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I said if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help and hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. at Erie Veterans Memorial Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Pennsylvania State Senator Jane M. Earll; John R. Evans, member, Pennsylvania General Assembly; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Proclamation 7807—Minority Enterprise Development Week, 2004

September 4, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Minority businesses are a key component of the American economy and reflect the values that make our country strong. They create opportunities for workers, provide goods and services to consumers, and strengthen our communities. During Minority Enterprise Development Week, we celebrate the achievements of minority businesses and emphasize our commitment to creating an environment in which these entrepreneurs can succeed.

All of America benefits from the strong and vibrant entrepreneurial spirit of our small business owners. By reducing taxes, encouraging investment, and removing obstacles to growth, my Administration has helped American businesses thrive and create nearly 1.7 million new jobs since August 2003. In addition, the number of Small Business Administration loans to minorities increased by 40 percent last year to a 50-year record level. And my fiscal year 2005 budget request includes a 21 percent increase in funding for the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency, the largest increase in more than a decade.

To help provide sustainable outreach to minority enterprises, my Administration is working with the National Urban League to create an entrepreneurship network to further expand minority business ownership. With the help of government agencies, the private sector, and faith-based and community organizations, this network will include

one-stop centers for business training, counseling, financing, and contracting and will focus resources toward facilitating economic growth and enterprise in historically neglected areas.

More minorities own small businesses than ever before. That is good for our citizens and good for our country. Together, we can create an environment where entrepreneurs can flourish and everyone can realize the American Dream.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 5 through September 11, 2004, as Minority Enterprise Development Week. I call upon all Americans to celebrate this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities and to recognize the countless contributions of our Nation's minority enterprises.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 8, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 9.

Remarks in Parkersburg, West Virginia

September 5, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for taking time out of your Sunday to say hello. I appreciate you giving me the chance to come and tell you I want your vote. I believe you got to get out amongst the people and ask for the vote, and that's what I'm doing.

It's great to be back in West Virginia. It seems like I'm making a habit coming here. It ought to be clear to the people of this State that I want to carry West Virginia again. And it's clear to me, having been here a lot and seeing the enthusiasm and the size of the crowds, with your help, we will carry West Virginia again.

I like this State. It's the home of really good people, beautiful scenery, and good hunting and fishing.

I wish Laura were traveling with me today. She's at home. She's been on the road a lot and—what a great speech she gave the other night in New York City. I'm really proud of her. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife, a terrific First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Dick Cheney for working so hard. He's a great Vice President. I'm proud to be running with him. You know, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] But I picked him because of his experience and judgment and because he can get the job done.

I want to thank Shelley Moore Capito for joining us, the fine Congresswoman from West Virginia. I appreciate you coming, Shelley Moore.

I want to thank your Mayor, Mayor Jimmy Colombo. Thanks for coming, Jimmy. I'm proud you're here. I'm honored you're here, sir. Next time I come back, we'll make sure you got a seat. [*Laughter*] But I'm proud you're here. Thank you, sir, for coming.

You know, there's a—like Jimmy, there's a lot of Democrats here in the crowd, and I want to thank you all for coming. See, my message is for everybody. A safer, stronger, better America is for every citizen of this country. I think old Zell Miller set a pretty good tempo for Democrats all across the country. He made it clear it's all right to come and support the Bush ticket. So if you're a Democrat and you're here, welcome. If you're an independent and you're here, welcome. If you're a Republican and you're here, thank you for your help.

I want to thank all those who are running for office who are here, but most importantly, I want to thank you all. I also want to thank the folks at Parkersburg High. I want to thank Ralph Board, the principal, and the students at Parkersburg High. I want to thank the community band that is here. Thank you all for coming.

Looks like you all take high school football pretty seriously, kind of like where I was raised. There's nothing like Friday night football. I want to thank—did you win last night—or last Friday? You did? Good. That's great. Now go do your homework. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the West Virginia Army National Guard 1092d Engineer Combat Battalion. Thanks for the good job you did in Iraq. I'm proud of your service.

Not only am I here to ask for your vote, I'm here to ask for your help. See, we have a duty in this country to vote. And I would hope you would go out and register your friends and neighbors and remind them that in a democracy, free citizens must participate. And then when you get them headed toward the polls, just remind them that George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, I'm looking forward to campaigning in West Virginia and Ohio and all around this country. And as I do so, I'll tell you where I stand, I'll tell you what I believe, and I'll tell you where I'll lead this country. I believe that every child can learn and every school must teach. That's why we passed Federal education reforms to raise the bar, to trust local people with the decisions in the schools, to measure early so we can correct problems before it's too late. We're closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our citizens with good health care. That's why I went to Washington, DC, to strengthen Medicare. The old system said, "We'll pay for heart surgery at $100,000 or so, but we won't pay for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place." Beginning in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage in Medicare, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation of America, workers and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners, so we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation.

We've overcome a recession, corporate scandals, terrorist attack. Our economy is growing, and it is getting stronger. Just this past week, we received the jobs report for August. America added 144,000 new jobs last month. Plus 60,000 jobs upward revision for the previous 2 months, we've added over 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, and the unemployment rate in the great State of West Virginia is 5.2 percent. Our economic plan is working.

I believe the most solemn duty of the President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch. I'm running with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy: Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, principled, consistent leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to score a great national victory in November.

The other night when I was speaking in New York, I told the American people I understand we're living in a changing world. It's a different world from the world of our parents and grandparents. People are changing jobs quite frequently. The workplace has changed. Many women work not only inside their homes but outside the home as well. It's a changing world. And yet, the fundamental systems of America were built for yesterday, not tomorrow. Our Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training were all set up for a bygone era. And I believe we need to change those systems to help the American people realize their dreams.

But any hopeful society is one in which the economy is growing. To create more jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to have—that means we need legal reform so our small businesses don't have to shut their doors because of frivolous lawsuits. That means we need—Congress needs to get an energy plan to my desk, which encourages conservation, renewables, but also encourages clean coal technology. In order to keep jobs here in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here in America, we must open up markets overseas for our entrepreneurs and manufacturers and farmers and ranchers. We open up our markets, and that's good for you. What I tell other countries like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we got to be wise about how we spend your money, and we got to keep your taxes low. We have a difference of opinion on taxes in this campaign. My opponent has promised to raise some taxes. That's a promise politicians tend to keep.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. This Labor Day weekend, it is important for America's workers to know that my opponent wants to tax your jobs. His plan to raise taxes on those at the top end of the income tax scale will raise taxes for the 900,000 small businesses and entrepreneurs who pay at the individual rate and who are creating most of the new jobs in our changing economy. Raising taxes will stifle job creation. The way to get more Americans working is to support the small businesses who are creating 70 percent of the new jobs in America.

I'll tell you what else we've got to fix is the Tax Code. It is a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. Americans spend about 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year on the Tax Code. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify and make fair the Federal Tax Code.

We will expand access to our community colleges so workers will have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. You know that most new jobs in America are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only one in four students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we'll do more to make quality health care available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. In order to make sure these families get help, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We will offer tax credits to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts. I will ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Government officials in Washington, DC.

Talk about an issue that's important here in West Virginia and around our country, and that is, these frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of your health care, and they're running good docs out of business. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice: I am for medical liability reform—now.

In a new term, we'll continue to promote an ownership society. Listen, in changing times, if you own something, you bring stability to your life. We're going to expand homeownership in America. Do you realize homeownership is at an alltime high in America? There's nothing better than more American citizens opening the door to the place where they live and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well we've got to make sure our retirement systems work well, particularly for younger workers. If you're a baby boomer or older, Social Security will take care of you. It will meet your promise. But if you're a younger worker, you better take a good look at the balance sheet of Social Security. I believe young workers ought to be able to take

some of their own taxes and put it in a personal account in order to make sure the retirement system is around for them, a personal account they'll call a nest egg of their own that Government cannot take away.

We have a different philosophy in this race. If you listen carefully to the fellow I'm running against, he's talking about expanding Government. He wants to increase Government and the role of Government. That's different from our philosophy. I believe the proper role of Government is to increase opportunity, so citizens can realize their full potential and realize the great dream of the United States of America.

In a world of change, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a changing world, we must support the institutions that are important to our society, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. Because a caring society will value its weakest members, we must make a place for the unborn child. Because religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, our Government must never discriminate against them. Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges. And I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, we have fought with the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens depend on it. Our strategy is clear. We'll defend the homeland. We'll stay on the offensive. We'll strike the terrorists abroad, so we do not have to face them here at home. And we'll work to promote liberty around the world, particularly the broader Middle East. And if we're strong and if we got faith in our values, we will prevail.

Listen, our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi was a fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Now, because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons program; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew that. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, we must think differently about how to defend our country. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence, looked at the same history of Saddam Hussein, and came to the same conclusion. They saw a threat, including my opponent, who looked at the same intelligence I looked at and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And the Congress voted the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must exhaust all other options to solve a problem. And so I tried the diplomatic route. I went to the United Nations. I said to the United Nations, I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history, and with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

The free world spoke, but as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein wasn't interested in what the free world said. See, he got used to ignoring the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when they sent weapons inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or defend this country.

Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq are now free—50 million people. You know, it's amazing what's happening in Afghanistan. That was a country where the Taliban would not allow many young girls to go to school and take their moms out in the public square and whip them if they didn't like the way they were thinking or behaving. These people were barbaric. It's hard for the American mind to comprehend how backwards and barbaric these people were. Today, over 10 million citizens have registered to vote in the October Presidential elections in Afghanistan.

Freedom is powerful—freedom is powerful. Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled there in January. Our Nation is standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We're also doing because it's in our interest. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace. Our mission in those two countries is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies so the Afghan people and the Iraqi people can stand up for freedom in their own societies. We'll help elections come forward. We'll get them on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country here at home and around the world. We have got a fantastic United States military. And I want to thank all of the veterans who are here today for having such—set such a great example for the men and women of the United States military.

We made a commitment to our troops and to the loved ones—and to their loved ones—that we'll support them in their missions. That's why I went to the Congress last September and proposed supplemental funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, that which is necessary to support our men and women in Afghanistan and Iraq. It's an $87 billion request. It was necessary. As a matter of fact, the Congress believed that. It was—there was overwhelming support, and so overwhelming only 12 United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As a matter of fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, "You know, why didn't you vote?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Then they pressed him further, and he said he's proud of his vote, and then he said, "Well, the whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work with our allies and friends to promote freedom and peace. We've got a great coalition put together; nearly 40 countries are involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's why I say these are historic times. The world is changing. As liberty moves on, so will peace, the peace we all want. You know, I like to tell about my business with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. You know, we sit at a table together, and we're talking about peace, talking about North Korea and how to keep the peace, talking about Iraq and how to keep the peace—an interesting conversation when you think about it, because it wasn't all that long ago that my dad and your dads and granddads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy. And yet, because, after World War II, Harry Truman and others believed that liberty could transform countries and transform people, because they held firm to the values of America,

Japan today is no longer an enemy. It's an ally in keeping the peace. Someday an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq; they'll be talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place.

I believe that. I believe people long to be free. I believe people, if given a chance to be free, will choose freedom. I believe that because America is not—freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep, abiding faith in the values that make us a great country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." A guy grabbed me by the arm and said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've got a vision and a plan to make America a safer place and a more hopeful place for every citizen. Four years ago, I traveled your State and I said if you gave me the great honor of holding this office, I would uphold the honor and dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Appreciate you being here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. at Parkersburg High School. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jimmy Colombo of Parkersburg, WV; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Supplemental Budget Request To Support Comprehensive Response and Recovery Efforts After Hurricane Charley

September 6, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On August 27th, I announced that I would submit a supplemental request to the Congress of approximately $2 billion to pay for comprehensive response and recovery efforts after Hurricane Charley. This was in addition to response and recovery efforts being undertaken by federal government agencies using existing resources and programs.

Because of the severity and timing of Hurricane Frances, I ask the Congress to consider expeditiously the enclosed request, totaling $2.0 billion, for an emergency FY 2004 supplemental appropriation for the Department of Homeland Security.

I hereby designate this proposal in the amount requested herein as an emergency requirement. This request responds to urgent needs associated with Hurricanes Charley and Frances in Florida and other affected areas, and will enable the Federal Emergency Management Agency to respond to additional disasters should they occur.

The enclosed request requires immediate action by the Congress to ensure that the immediate response efforts to these recent disasters continue uninterrupted. I anticipate making a further request in the coming days that will provide for a comprehensive response and recovery effort addressing the impact of both of these hurricanes. In addition, federal government agencies will continue their response and recovery efforts using existing resources and programs.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Remarks in Poplar Bluff, Missouri

September 6, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. I'm glad to be here celebrating Labor Day with you. It's good to be in a part of the world where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. Thanks for coming. You know, you might have heard I got an interesting invitation to come here to Poplar Bluff, Missouri. I get a lot of invitations. I've never gotten one with 10,000 signatures on it. But I was somewhat surprised when we choppered over here, because it looks like there's a lot more people than 10,000 that have come today.

Thanks for coming. Thanks for having me. It's a beautiful part of the world. People are good people here. I'm proud to be here to ask for your vote. You sure know how to make a President feel welcome.

And I know you will join me in wishing President Clinton the very best wishes in the recovery from his surgery. His surgery went well, which is good news. And we just pray for a speedy recovery for the former President.

My one regret today is I wish Laura were here to see the size of this crowd. You know, she was a public school librarian when I asked her to marry me. She was working at an elementary school, and she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, it's not a promise she held me to. She gave a fantastic speech. She's a great mom. She is a wonderful wife. She is a great First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm proud to be running for a second term with my friend Dick Cheney. He doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he has good judgment, great experience, and he can get the job done.

I appreciate my friend Jo Ann Emerson, the fine Congresswoman from this district. She's a pleasure to work with. Every time I see her, she says, "Remember Missouri." And so does your Senator, Kit Bond. I'm proud to be here with Kit. I'm asking you to put me back in there, but make sure, as you do, put him in too. He's a great United States Senator. Give him 6 more years.

And Jim Talent—Jim Talent is a fine Senator as well. As they say down in Crawford, he's making a good hand—[*laughter*]—smart guy, good, honest man. I appreciate being with him.

It's good to be here with your next Governor, Matt Blunt. I appreciate my friend Peter Kinder here. He's representing the State senate. It looks like his cousin came. [*Laughter*] House Speaker Catherine Hanaway is with us. I'm proud you're here.

I want to thank Mayor Lloyd Matthews. Mr. Mayor, thank you so very much for this very generous and kind introduction—invitation to be here. It means a lot. And I also want to thank Hardy Billington and David Hahn. These are local veterans. These boys sure know how to throw a party. I want to thank the Sho-Me marching band. Thank you all for coming. Poplar Bluff High School, I appreciate you all being here.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming on Labor Day. It means a lot.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Well, I'm glad to be here. But I'm not only asking for the vote; I'm asking for your help. I think it's really important in our society to vote. I believe in a free society, we have an obligation to participate in our elections.

So I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors. Don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller. Zell Miller knows. There's a lot of good Democrats in this part of the world that understand that Dick Cheney and I will make this world safer, stronger, and better for every single American. And if you're a Democrat or independent, you're welcome here. We're glad you're here.

And then when you get people heading to the polls, after you register them, get them leaning our way. Get them to come our way. I want to thank you for your help. I want to thank you for what you're going to do, coming down the stretch run. There's no

doubt in my mind, with your help, we'll carry Missouri again and win the big election in November of '04.

I'm looking forward to this race. I am. I like to get out with the people. I'm looking forward to telling the people of this country where I stand, what I believe, and where I'll lead this country.

I believe every child can learn and that every school must teach. That's why we passed important reforms of our schools in Washington. See, we're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. I believe if you lower the bar, you're going to get lousy results. I believe if you believe in the best and worth of every child and raise that bar, you're going to get excellent results. I believe it's important to measure early, so you can solve problems early, before it's too late. We've got to stop this practice of just shuffling kids through school whether they can read and write and add and subtract or not. I believe in local control of schools. And I know we're making progress closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. You might remember the old Medicare debate. They called it "Mediscare." [*Laughter*] People would talk about it; then they would beat you over the head politically with the issue. But I went to Washington to fix things. I went to Washington to solve problems. Listen, the old Medicare system, which worked well for a lot of seniors, got outdated. After all, it would pay $100,000 for heart surgery but wouldn't pay for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. So we strengthened and modernized Medicare. Our seniors got choices. And beginning in 2006, there's going to prescription drug coverage for our seniors. And we are not going to turn back.

I believe in the energy and innovation of our farmers and workers and small-business owners and ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. When you're out there gathering up the vote, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors what we have been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a terrorist attack, all of which affected our economy. But we're overcoming those obstacles.

This economy, because of our tax relief and because we've got great people in this country who refuse to be intimidated, who believe in a future, is strong, and it's getting stronger. Last Friday, we showed we added 144,000 new jobs in August—1.7 million since August of '03. The national unemployment rate has fallen to 5.4 percent. That is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

I believe a President must confront problems and not pass them on to future generations and future Presidents. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy. Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to score a great national victory in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, the world we live in is a changing world. You know, when our dads were coming up, a person was likely to have one job at one company, and mom was going to stay at home. That's just the way it used to be. It's changed here in America. A lot of women not only work inside the home; they're working outside the home. Our workforce is changing. People are changing careers more often these days.

And yet, the most fundamental systems, the Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. I'm running to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus free to be able to realize the great promise of America.

Listen, any hopeful society has got to have a growing economy. And that's why I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward.

In a changing world, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to stop these junk lawsuits that are hounding our small-business owners in America. It means we've got to reduce the regulations on those who employee people.

To create jobs here in America, we need an energy plan. Listen, I submitted one to the Congress over 2 years ago. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that encourages the use of renewable sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. It's a plan that encourages clean coal technology. It's a plan that encourages environmentally sensitive exploration for natural gas. But it's a plan that says, "If we expect to keep jobs in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

We're going to keep opening up markets. Listen, this farm economy is strong. You might remember what it was like in 2000. Now, look, I understand the farm economy is never strong enough—[*laughter*]—and the weather is never good enough. [*Laughter*] The price of beans and corn are pretty high. And one reason it's high is because I made a pledge to our farmers here in Missouri and around the country that I would do my best to open up markets. We want you feeding not only the American citizens; we want you feeding everybody around the world.

To create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington and keep your taxes low. Listen, there's a difference in this campaign about taxes. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over $2 trillion of new Federal spending. And so they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, I'm going to pay for it by just taxing the rich." Let me tell you two things wrong with that: One, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for the $2 trillion in new spending. You can play like you can tax the rich enough to do it, but the numbers don't add up. Secondly, you've heard that business, haven't you, in politics, about "tax the rich?" That's why they hire accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win in November.

Another drag on our economy is the Federal Tax Code. The Tax Code today is a complicated mess. It's more than a million words long and filled with loopholes for special interests. This Tax Code weighs heavily on our economy. It weighs heavily on every American family. Sitting down to do your taxes shouldn't require wading through more than 1 million words of complicated rules.

This current Tax Code burdens hard-working Americans with more than 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year. That's about as much time as all Missouri's workers and small-business owners and farmers and ranchers spend at work in an average year. This Tax Code needs to be changed.

The Tax Code is so complicated, even the short tax form requires more than 11 hours to prepare. That doesn't sound very short to me. For the sake of economic growth and for the sake of fairness, I will lead a bipartisan team to simplify and reform the Federal Tax Code.

We need to do more to help our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'll double the number of people served by our principal job training program and expand access to our community colleges all across America.

Most new jobs are now filled by people with at least 2 hours of college—2 years of college. Yet one in four of our students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance at our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we'll help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we've got to make sure that we've got health care that's available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. Yet small businesses are having trouble affording health care. To make sure they get the help they need, we will allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We'll expand health savings accounts. We're going to make sure that every poor county in America has got a health center—a health community center or a rural health

center, so people can get the primary care they need, so we can help people with their health care.

But let me tell you what else we need to do. We need to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of your health care and running good docs out of business. We've got an issue in America. Too many good docs are getting out of business. Too many ob-gyns aren't able to practice their love with women all across this country. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-hospital and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you've got to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We'll continue to promote ownership in America. In a changing time, ownership can bring stability to your life. There's nothing better than hearing the fact that more and more people are owning their own home. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. We'll continue to expand homeownership across this country. There's nothing better than somebody opening up their door saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well our retirement systems must reflect the changing times. If you're an older citizen, or a near-older citizen like me, a baby boomer, nothing is going to change with your Social Security. It's a solemn pledge this Government has made. It's a pledge that will be kept. But we better worry about our children and grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to put some of their taxes aside in a personal savings account to enhance their Social Security benefit.

There's a difference of philosophy in this campaign. If you listen carefully to the rhetoric of my opponent, he's going to expand Government. Ours is a campaign that is going to expand opportunity. I believe Government ought to trust the people of the United States of America.

In a changing world, there are some things that won't change, the values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity. In a changing world, we will stand by the institutions that give us stability, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for religious charities and community-based organizations that provide a safety net of mercy and compassion. Our Government must never discriminate against faith-based programs. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We'll defend our homeland. We'll transform our military. We'll reform and strengthen our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world by staying true to our beliefs and being resolved and firm. We will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. I want you to listen to this. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned its attacks. Because we acted, the Government of Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

Progress involved careful diplomacy and clear moral purpose and some tough decisions, and the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. Remember, he housed Abu Nidal and his crowd. He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. Zarqawi and his bunch—he's the guy that beheads people—he paid the families of suiciders. He subsidized them. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. It's a lesson we must not forget. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the intelligence I looked at. They remembered the history I remembered. And they voted overwhelmingly to use—to authorize the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at. He voted for the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into combat, we must try all means to solve a problem. That's why I went to the United Nations. I was hoping that diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history of Saddam Hussein that we remembered. And they voted 15 to nothing, and the U.N. Security Council said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke again.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused the demands of the free world. He wasn't interested. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make at this point in our history: Do I trust the word of a madman——

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. ——do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because we acted in our own self-interest, because we acted to defend ourselves, 50 million people now live in freedom. In Afghanistan, a country which has been brutalized by the Taliban, a country in which many young girls didn't get to go to school, a country in which their moms were whipped in the public squares because they didn't toe the line to these barbarians running the country, has now registered 10 million people to vote in the upcoming election. Freedom is powerful. Freedom is powerful. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a very strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections will be held in Iraq in January.

We're going to stand with the people in those countries because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. And we're serving a vital cause. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. And that keeps us safer, and it makes the world more peaceful.

Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We will help new leaders to train their armies so Afghan citizens and Iraqi citizens can defend their country against the few who want to thwart the hopes of the many. We'll help them move toward elections. We'll get them to the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I've had the privilege of meeting many who serve. I've seen their unselfish courage and their great decency. Ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands. And I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example to those who wear the uniform.

I've made a commitment to our troops and to their loved ones. They will have all the resources, all the tools and support they need for them to do their missions. That's why a year ago, September, I went to Congress and proposed $87 billion in funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, other supplies needed for our troops in combat in Afghanistan and in Iraq. And that really important funding request received bipartisan support. It was so overwhelming that only 12 United States Senators voted against

the funding request, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force, and then voted against funding our troops—only four—and two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate. When asked to explain his decision, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I suspect here in Poplar Bluff, not many people talk that way. They then pressed him, and he said he's proud of his vote. And finally, he said, "It was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

After voting for the war but against funding it, after saying he would have voted for the war even knowing everything we know today, my opponent woke up this morning with new campaign advisers and yet another new position. [*Laughter*] Suddenly, he's against it again. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. No matter how many times Senator Kerry changes his mind, it was right for America then, and it's right for America now that Saddam Hussein is no longer in power.

Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work with our allies and friends to promote freedom and peace. There's about 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. And I appreciate their service and sacrifice, and so do our troops. Over the 4 years, we'll build these alliances and make them stronger, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I believe America is called to lead the cause of freedom. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government every devised by man. I believe all these things because I understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. We'll reform our systems to help our people, to help people realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace, the peace we all want.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, there are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that needs—when we need firm resolve and clear vision and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there, yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to do my best to comfort people, and a guy looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." He took that day personally. Everybody there took it personally. You took it personally, and so did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote. I said if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help, with your hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all. Thanks so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. at Ray Clinton Park. In his remarks, he referred to Missouri Secretary of State Matt Blunt, candidate for Missouri Governor; Missouri State Senator Peter Kinder, candidate for Missouri Lieutenant Governor; Catherine L. Hanaway, speaker, Missouri House of Representatives; Mayor Lloyd Matthews

of Poplar Bluff, MO; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Memorandum on the 2004 Combined Federal Campaign

September 6, 2004

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: 2004 Combined Federal Campaign

I am delighted that the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Michael O. Leavitt, has agreed to serve as the Chair of the 2004 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of the National Capital Area. I ask you to enthusiastically support the CFC by personally chairing the campaign in your Agency and appointing a top official as your Vice Chair.

The Combined Federal Campaign is an important way for Federal employees to support thousands of worthy charities. Public servants not only contribute to the campaign but also assume leadership roles to ensure its success.

Your personal support and enthusiasm will help positively influence thousands of employees and will guarantee another successful campaign.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 7. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks in Lee's Summit, Missouri

September 7, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all very much for coming this morning. We're starting a bus trip here in your important State, and a great place to start right here in Lee's Summit. I appreciate you coming out.

And I want to thank the good folks here at Lee's Summit High for opening up this beautiful facility. I want to thank Tony Stansberry, who is the superintendent, and John Faulkenberry, who is the principal. I want to thank all the teachers who are here for teaching. I want to thank the students who are here. Listen, study more than you watch TV.

Thanks for coming out to say hello. I'm here to ask for your vote. I think you've got to get out amongst the people and give them a reason why, and that's what I'm here to do today and to ask for that vote. We carried Missouri last time, and with your help, we'll carry it this time.

I'm sorry Laura is not with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. Yes, I know. [*Laughter*] When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, I will, so long as I don't ever have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. She did a magnificent job last week in New York City. I'm not surprised. She's a great person, a wonderful wife, great mom. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura has 4 more years as the First Lady.

I appreciate my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's a fine guy. I admit he doesn't have the prettiest hairdo in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank my friend Kit Bond, the United States Senator from the State of Missouri, for his leadership. Put him back in there for 6 more years. Reelect this good man. And he's working with a good fellow in Jim Talent, the other United States Senator from Missouri. I really appreciate working with him. I also appreciate working with Congressman Sam Graves, who is with us today.

I wish Jeanne Patterson all the best in her run for the United States Congress. Chris Byrd is here. Madame Mayor is with us today, Mayor Karen Messerli. I appreciate her coming. Madame Mayor, I'm honored you're here. Thanks for taking time to be here today. Appreciate your support. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Mark Wills for being here, the country and western singer.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. These are the people who are out putting up the signs and making the phone calls and registering the voters. I particularly urge you to register people to vote over the next weeks. See, it's really important in this country to vote. I want the high school kids who are here to understand, if you live in a free country, I believe you need to vote. I believe you need to participate. So make sure you go register to vote, and I want to thank the people here who are registering people to vote.

And when you register people to vote, remember that example Zell Miller set the other night. There are plenty of Democrats who are coming our way, plenty of people who understand if you put Dick Cheney and me back in office, this country will be safer, stronger, and better for every American.

I'm looking forward to this campaign. I'm looking forward to continuing to travel your State and all across the country. I'm going to tell people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'll lead this country.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. That's why we've raised the standards. That's why we believe we ought to measure early and correct problems before they're too late. That's why I believe we ought to stop this practice of just shuffling kids through school whether they can read or write or not. We're closing the achievement gap here in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. When I got elected, I told the people that I'd try to strengthen Medicare. See, the old system was working fine for a while, but medicine changed and Medicare didn't. For example, they pay about $100,000 for heart surgery but not the prescription drugs necessary to prevent the heart surgery from happening. That didn't make sense for our seniors, and it certainly doesn't make sense for our taxpayers. So I led the United States Congress. We strengthened Medicare. We're helping our seniors, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of America's workers and small-business owners, farmers and ranchers. And that is why we unleashed that spirit with the largest tax cut in a generation. We've overcome a lot. You know, I like to say this economy is strong and getting stronger. I say so because I know where we have come from. We've endured a recession, corporate scandals, a terrorist attack. And yet, this economy is growing. It's growing because our workers are great. It's growing because the small-business sector of America is strong. It's growing because our economic stimulus plan is working.

Last Friday, the jobs report for August showed we added 144,000 new jobs. That's 1.7 million over the last 12 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's fully a point below the peak last summer. It is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win a great victory in November.

Listen, the world in which we live and work is a changing world. You know, the generation of our dads and granddads was one where the male worked outside the home and generally at one job and one career, therefore, had one health care plan and one pension plan. This world of ours has changed. The workforce has changed. Many women not only work inside the home; they work outside the home. And people are changing jobs quite frequently here in America, and they're changing careers.

Yet the most fundamental systems, the Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans

and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not the world of tomorrow. We're going to transform those systems. We will change those systems so all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue your dreams.

Any hopeful society must be a society that keeps the economy moving forward, and I've got a plan. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create more jobs, we must reduce the regulation on our small businesses. To create more jobs, we must stop the junk lawsuits that threaten small businesses. The cost to our economy of litigation is conservatively estimated to be over $230 billion a year.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, listen, I understand my opponent changes positions a lot, but for 20 years he's been one of the trial lawyers' most reliable allies in the Senate. We have a difference of opinion. He's consistently voted against legal reform that would protect workers and entrepreneurs. His fellow lawyers have responded with millions of dollars in campaign donations. I have another view. I disagree with his position. I am for ending junk lawsuits. Personal injury lawyers should not get richer at the expense of hard-working Americans.

To keep jobs here in America, Congress must get my energy plan passed. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that encourages renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It is a plan that encourages clean coal technology. It's a plan that uses our resources wisely. It is a plan that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets for our products. See, we open up markets for foreign goods. It's good for you we do. When you have more choices to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. But we want countries to treat us like we treat them, because America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the playing field is level.

In order to keep jobs here, in order to make sure people can work, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington, and we must keep your taxes low. We have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has already promised $2 trillion of new money, see. And we haven't even gotten to the stretch run yet. It's awfully tempting, coming down the pike, to tell people what they want to hear. It's awfully easy to spend your money. And then they say, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, just don't worry about it. We'll just tax the rich."

First of all, you can't raise the money, enough money to pay for his promises, by taxing the rich. Secondly, when you tax the rich, you're taxing nearly a million small-business owners, because they pay tax at the individual income-tax level. Thirdly, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Yes. "Oh, don't worry, we'll tax the rich." Well, that's why the rich hire accountants and lawyers. Yes. They dodge; you pay. But we're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win this election in November.

I'll tell you what else we ought to do on taxes. We need to simplify the Federal Tax Code. It is more than a million words long. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to make the Tax Code simpler, more fair, and good for the workers and the small-business owners of America.

Listen, we've got to do more to help our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I know we need to double the number of people served by our job training programs and increase funding for our community college systems.

One other issue that's important, in terms of education, is that most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet, one in four students gets there. That's why I believe we need early intervention programs to help students in high school. We want everybody to have the skills necessary to move on. We'll place a new focus on math and science in our high schools. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low-

income and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In times of change, we've got to have a health care system that is available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees. That's because small businesses are having trouble with the cost of health care. To make sure that these families get the help they need, small firms must be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We want more people to own and manage their own health care plans, so we'll offer tax credits to expand health savings accounts. We'll ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center, to help those who need help with their primary care. And to make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running docs out of business and running up the cost of your health care.

Right before I came in here, I met with a fellow named Steve Reintjes. He's a neurosurgeon from Kansas City. In 4 years, his premiums have increased from $27,000 to about $90,000. That's because he's having to practice defensive medicine. In other words, he's practicing medicine so that—just in case he gets sued. That's what docs are having to do all over this country. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit in America. These frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of your health care. They're making it harder for good docs to practice medicine. That's why we need medical liability reform—now.

There is a clear difference in this campaign on this issue. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients all across America. In all we do, we'll make sure that the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, it will help people have stability and hope in their lives if they own something. That's why we'll continue to expand homeownership in America. Do you realize the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America? More and more people are owning their own home. More and more people are opening the door to where they live, and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well we've got to make sure our pension plans reflect the realities of the world in which we live. Senior citizens do not have to worry about Social Security. It's not going to change for you. Baby boomers like me don't have to worry about Social Security. It's not going to change. But if you're a younger guy, our children and grandchildren, they'd better be worried about Social Security. There's not enough payers into the system to take care of those of us who are going to be receiving. They better worry about it. I believe younger workers ought to have the option of taking some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account to help them with Social Security. It's a nest egg they call their own. It's a nest egg the Government cannot take away from them.

In this world of change, there are some things that aren't going to change, the beliefs that we—the values we try to live by, our basic beliefs, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we must support institutions which give us stability, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We support the religious charities and community-based organizations that provide a safety net of mercy and compassion. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing threat of terrorism. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming

our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We'll spread freedom and hope and opportunity throughout the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was a home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

Progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's records of aggression and his support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. Members of the Congress looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered, and they came to the conclusion that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and he voted yes when it came to the authorization of force.

Any time the Commander in Chief uses force, he must have exhausted all other options. I was hoping diplomacy would have solved this threat. So I went to the United Nations. I said, "You know, we see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history, and concluded that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. That was a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world, see. He had been told this before. And he said—as a matter of fact, when they sent in inspectors, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make at this time: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because we acted to defend ourself, because we took action to make America a safer place, more than 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq are now free.

You know, it wasn't all that long ago, in Afghanistan, where many young girls didn't get to go to school because the leaders there were so backward. And their moms could be hauled out in the public square and whipped or killed because they didn't toe this barbaric line of reasoning. And yet, today, 10 million people have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election in Afghanistan.

Freedom is powerful, isn't it? It's powerful. In Iraq, there's a strong Prime Minister. There's a National Council. National elections are scheduled in January. The world is changing. We're standing with the people of those countries, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. When a President says something, he must mean it.

In serving this vital and historic cause that makes our country safer, we're changing the world. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which will no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. That makes us safer.

Our mission in Afghanistan is clear. We will help the new leaders train their armies so that citizens of Iraq and Afghanistan can defend themselves against the few who are trying to stop the march of liberty for the many. We'll help them get to elections. We'll

get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I've had the privilege of meeting those who wear our uniform. I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage. I assure you, the cause of freedom is in really good hands. And I want to thank the veterans who are here, who have set such a fine example for the men and women of our military.

I made a commitment to our troops and our loved ones: They will have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress a year ago, a year ago this month. I proposed $87 billion in funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, and other supplies needed by our troops doing battle in Afghanistan and Iraq. We received great support in the Congress. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Only four people did that, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, what—you know, "How can you explain that?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And then they said, you know—and he said, well, he's proud of his vote. And then he said, "Well, the whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] Nothing complicated—there is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

I think this country wants consistent, principled leadership. My opponent has now voted for the war and against supplying our troops. When he got on in the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. More recently, he switched again, saying he would have voted for the war even knowing everything we know today. And he woke up yesterday morning with yet another new position. [*Laughter*] And this one is not even his own. [*Laughter*] It is that of his one-time rival, Howard Dean.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He even used the same words Howard Dean did back when he supposedly disagreed with him. [*Laughter*] No matter how many times Senator Kerry flip-flops, we were right to make America safer by removing Saddam Hussein from power.

It's also wrong for my opponent to denigrate the contributions of America's allies, who were standing side by side with our men and women in uniform risking their lives for freedom. There are over 40 nations in—nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to build and strengthen our alliances, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I believe that because I've looked closely at our history. You know, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi from Japan. He is, obviously, running a country that—with whom we were at war, not all that long ago in the march of history. You know, my dad fought against the Japanese. I'm sure your dads and granddads did as well.

But because we believe in liberty, because we believe that Japan could self-govern and become a peaceful nation, because Harry Truman, of Missouri, stood strong in the belief that freedom could transform lives, because the American people had faith in our values, Japan became an ally. Liberty changed an enemy to a friend, and today, we sit down at the same table talking about how to keep the peace. Someday an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace, how to make the world a more peaceful place.

I also believe in the power of liberty to transform lives—I understand—because I understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By transforming necessary systems that were designed in the past, we'll help Americans realize their dreams. Over the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to a young generation. We will continue to make the world a more free and peaceful place.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there, yelling, "Whatever it takes." I was trying to do my best to thank and comfort the firefighters and policemen and the rescuers. A guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote. I said if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:16 a.m. at Lee's Summit High School. In his remarks, he referred to Jeanne Patterson, candidate for Congress in Missouri's 5th Congressional District; Chris Byrd, candidate for Missouri Attorney General; Mayor Karen Messerli of Lee's Summit, MO; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in a Discussion in Sedalia, Missouri

September 7, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Please be seated. It's such an honor to be here. Thanks for coming. I don't know if you know it, but we're on a bus tour. I'm out asking for the vote. I believe—I like coming directly to the people, and say, "I want your vote, and here's the reason why I think you ought to vote for me." And that's what we're going to do today.

I thought we'd do it a little differently. I've got some things I want to share with you about what I'd like to accomplish during the next 4 years. And so we've asked some citizens to come and share some of their stories with you. I think that will help you understand why we have made decisions we have made and why we'll continue making certain types of decisions.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You betcha. And then I'd like to answer some questions. Some of you may have a question or two on your mind, and I'd like to answer them for you.

Before I begin, I wish Laura were here. She is a wonderful lady. If I don't get too long-winded, I'm going to have dinner with her tonight. [*Laughter*] She was a—she was raised in Midland, Texas. That's where I was raised. And she was a public school librarian when I married her. And she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, just so long as I don't have to give any speeches." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't—I said, "Fine, you don't ever have to give any speeches." And so, fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise that she wouldn't have to give any. She gave a magnificent speech in New York City the other night. I wasn't surprised. I wasn't surprised, because she's such a gentle soul. She's got a great heart. She's a wonderful mom, a terrific wife. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in there, but I think probably the most important one of all so is that Laura is your First Lady for 4 more years.

The other thing—then I'm running with a good man. We've got a great ticket. Dick Cheney has done a heck of a job as the Vice President. I like to tease him by saying, "Well, you know, I admit it, he's not the

prettiest face in the race." [*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him because of his looks. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience, and the fact that he can get the job done. He's a great Vice President. And I'm proud to be running with him. Proud to be running with him.

I want to thank my uncle, Bucky Bush, who is with us. He's a Missouri native—or citizen, right here, from St. Louis. I want to thank Charlie Kruse—where is Charlie? Oh, Charlie, God bless you, sir. Our prayers are with you. He's a good man. I've known Charlie for quite a while. He said—when I was campaigning in 2000, he said, "Whatever you do, do not forget the Missouri farmer." He said, "You keep that river open for our products." And we did. And I hadn't forgotten the Missouri farmer. The farm economy is strong, and we intend to keep it that way. I'm going to talk a little bit about that as we go on.

I appreciate the mayor being here, Mayor Wasson. Thanks for coming. Where are you, Mayor? I appreciate you. Glad you're here. Thanks for your hospitality. Tell your fire and policemen—firefighters and policemen how thankful we are for their service to your community.

And thank all the people who are involved with politics, the grassroots activists. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and register people to vote. I'm here to ask you to—at this stage of the campaign, I'm going around to your State today and around our country asking people to participate in the political process. In a free society, I believe people have a duty to vote. And that's what we're doing.

We're asking people to vote, you know. And we're—in order to vote, you've got to register to vote. And I'd like you to register your friends and neighbors and explain they have a duty. And when you're out registering them, don't overlook independents and discerning Democrats. You heard Zell Miller the other night. He said loud and clear, "If you want a better America, a safer America, and a stronger America, vote for George Bush and Dick Cheney." We welcome everybody in this campaign.

Today I met Bill Dugan. Where are you, Bill? There he is. Thanks for coming. Bill's a soldier in the army of compassion; that's what he is. He's a fellow who has worked for Habitat for Humanity. He volunteered time out of his life to help people with a home, and that's an important part of our society, when you think about it. The strength of America is the hearts and souls of our citizens. Government is limited in its capacity. We can pass laws, and we will. We can enforce justice, and we will. But Government can't make people love one another. Love comes from something higher than Government. And when people like Bill are moved to help somebody, it makes society a better place.

One of the most important initiatives of the previous 4 years—and it will be an important initiative for the next 4 years—is the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative, which will rally the armies of compassion.

People say, "Well, what exactly do you mean by that? What do you mean by that?" I'll tell you what I mean by that. I mean this, that when it comes, for example, to helping the—to heal the addicted, that we've got to recognize that sometimes Government programs work, but sometimes, in order to help a fellow get off drugs, you've got to—or alcohol, you've got to have a change of heart. And therefore, a faith-based program is the kind of program that could be effective at helping somebody change the heart and, therefore, change the habit. We ought to welcome programs which work. We ought not to discriminate against faith-based programs. We ought to welcome faith-based programs to help Americans realize the full promise of our country.

I want to thank Bill for being here. I want to thank you for the example you set. Thank you for loving a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

I tell people I'm for a more hopeful America, and that means our job base has got to grow. We've overcome a lot, when it comes to our economy. When you're out there gathering up the vote, remind people about what this country has been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. It's now clear, by the way, because of the law we passed, that we'll not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of

America. We've been through a terrorist attack, and that hurt us. We're overcoming these obstacles because of the hard work of the American people; we've got great workers; because the small-business sector is strong; the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in America. We've overcoming them because we've got great farmers and ranchers.

And we're overcoming it because of tax relief. The tax relief we passed is working. Do you realize the national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent? That's lower than the averages of the—average, national average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The question is, how do we make sure jobs stay at home and the economy continues to grow?

I'll give you some ways to make sure it continues to grow. First, this has got to be the best place in the world to do business, which means we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are threatening these small employers. In order to make sure jobs stay in America, we have to have a national energy plan. Listen, I submitted one to the United States Congress. They need to get it to my desk. It's a plan that encourages conservation. That makes sense, doesn't it? We want to encourage people to conserve more. It's a plan that encourages the use of renewable sources of energy. I'm talking about corn and soybeans, is what I'm talking about. See, we need to spend research dollars so that someday, somebody is going to walk in and say, "Here's the crop report, Mr. President, and it looks like corn is up." And the President will say, "Gosh, that means we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

We need to use clean coal technology. We need to explore in our own lands in sensitive ways. What I'm telling you is, to keep jobs in America, we must be less dependent on energy from overseas.

To keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets to U.S. products. Listen, we open up our markets to goods from other countries, and that's good for the consumer. That's how the market works. If you've got more things to choose from, you're more likely to get a product you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the economy works.

So what this administration is saying to places like China and elsewhere, "You treat us the way we treat you." And that's why the price of soybeans is doing pretty good, because we're selling soybeans all around the world. My job for the next 4 years is to open up markets. We can compete with anybody, anyplace, anytime if the rules are fair.

In order to make sure that we've got jobs here at home, we need a health care system that functions well. That means health care has got to be available and affordable. Let's talk about health care right quick. First, we started by strengthen—my administration started on health care by strengthening Medicare. I told the people when I was running, "Give me a chance, and I'll go to Washington and try to make sure Medicare worked well." You might remember those old Medicare debates. They called it "Mediscare" for—because people were scared to talk about it. I went up there for a reason. See, the Medicare system had done great work for our seniors, but it was beginning to get antiquated. Medicine was changing. Medicare wasn't.

And the system was designed that so that any new procedures has to be approved by bureaucracies. We would pay, for example, for heart surgery, which would cost maybe $100,000, but we wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from having to occur in the first place. That didn't make much sense to the seniors. It certainly didn't make much sense to the taxpayers, since the cost of prescription drugs is a heck of a lot less than the surgery.

And therefore, I worked with Congress. I said, "Why don't we make the system work better." Right now, seniors can get prescription drug coverage, and if you're a low-income senior, you get your drugs paid for, up to $600 a year. Next year, seniors, when they enroll in Medicare, are going to get preventative screening for the first time ever, which makes a lot of sense, doesn't it, for seniors to get—and in 2006, prescription drugs will be available in Medicare.

There's more to do in health care. My philosophy is, is that the health care decisions need to be made between doctors and patients, should not be made by bureaucrats

in Washington, DC. So a lot of what I'm talking about is to strengthen the ability for people to make decisions. Small-business owners are having trouble with their health care, because the cost is going up. We're going to talk to a small-business owner who just told me that a while ago.

The way to help small businesses deal with rising health care costs is to allow them to pool together, pool the risk together, so that they can be able to buy insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to do. Those are called association health plans. We need to expand health savings accounts, which will allow workers and/or small businesses to put money aside on a tax-free basis, to earn money tax-free, to use your money tax-free for health care needs. There's all kinds of ways to make sure that health care is vibrant and alive and well without nationalizing health care.

We've got a doc here today with us, and we're going to talk about medical liability reform, which is going to make sure that we—when we get it, it's going to help you on your costs and the availability for medicine.

I want to talk a little bit about pensions. I told the people the other night, we have a changing world, and yet the institutions, fundamental institutions of our Government haven't changed with them. In other words, the pension plans were designed for the 19—in the 1930s. They haven't changed. The health care systems haven't changed. The Tax Code hasn't changed much since—you know, we need to change these systems. Job training programs haven't changed much to reflect the world in which we live in.

The next 4 years, we're going to change these aspects of Government to help people realize their dreams. It's another one of my philosophies. Government ought to help people, not dictate to people, and Government ought to trust people.

One way to trust them is to make sure the Social Security System works well. If you're an older citizen, you just don't have to worry about Social Security. It's not going to change. You're in good shape. There's ample money in the trust fund to take care of you. If you're a baby boomer like me, it's going to be okay, but we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. That's who we need to worry about when it comes to Social Security. And I believe we ought to allow younger workers to take some of their taxes and set them aside in a personal savings account that they can call their own to help make sure Social Security is available for a younger generation.

I think you have to think differently. Let me talk about education right quick. We have—I went to Washington with the idea of expanding the role of the local folks when it comes to schools but, at the same time, saying, "In return for extra money, why don't you show us whether or not your children can read." It doesn't seem like too tough a request to me. It seemed like a reasonable request.

And the reason why I thought that was necessary is because you know what I know: Too many of our kids were just moving through school, grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics, and that's not right. That's setting the bar too low. I believe the role of all of us is to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I believe every child can learn to read, and I expect every child to read, and so should you.

And that's the philosophy behind the No Child Left Behind Act. It says, "Let us measure early so we can correct problems early." See, you can't solve a problem until you diagnose the problem. And so we're now diagnosing problems in education, and we're raising the standards. And the achievement gap in America is getting better. You know how we know? We measure. We can show you that more and more children are learning to read and write and add and subtract because we take time to measure. We use the measurement system to support our teachers and principals. We use the measurement system to determine whether or not the curriculum being used at the local level is working. We use our measurement system to heap praise on those who are doing a fantastic job in the public schools, and there are thousands across our country who are. And we use the measurement system to correct early, before it's too late.

There's more to do. There's more to do. We need early intervention—or intervention programs in high schools. We need to make sure that children have got the basics. We

need to emphasize math and science in our high schools. Do you realize that most new jobs now require 2 years of college, yet one in four students in America gets there? That's why we need to expand access to our community college systems. We need to increase Pell grants to help low- and middle-income families. We want more and more of our children starting their careers with a college diploma.

There's more work to be done in education, and I'm looking forward to continuing to lead the country in that direction. Let me talk to some of the folks with us. Perhaps they'll help me make our points that I'm trying to make today. One of the things I love about our society is people own things, an ownership society. You know, we want more people owning their own home. Do you realize the homeownership rate is at an alltime high during my administration? I think it's an incredibly hopeful statistic. I like to put it this way: More and more people are opening up the door in the places in which they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

Ownership is a part of a hopeful America. When you hear me say "a more hopeful America," it means I'm going to encourage ownership in our society. And one of the things we also—I like about America and I think one of the things that's really interesting about our country is more and more people own their own small business. Do you realize 70 percent of new jobs are created by small-business owners—70 percent of jobs. Therefore, all policy or good policy is aimed at helping the small-business sector of America remain strong and vibrant. If 70 percent of all new jobs are created by small businesses and we want to continue to expand our job base, policy ought to focus on small-business owners.

Today we've got one with us. Wayne Lamb is with us. [*Applause*] Sounds like some of them know you.

Wayne Lamb. I guess so.

The President. Okay. The name of your company?

Mr. Lamb. Sedalia Steel Supply.

The President. Sedalia Steel Supply. And what do you do?

Mr. Lamb. We're a steel service center, and we service the Midwest—we service all the mid-part of Missouri with—we buy steel from large mills, break it into smaller quantities, take it to schools, manufacturing companies, maintenance fabricators. We process it. Just pass the savings on that way.

The President. Yes, good. And let me ask you, when did you start—did you start the business?

Mr. Lamb. Started it in 1976, so we're almost 28 years old.

The President. This wasn't one of those deals that started in your garage, was it?

Mr. Lamb. No, it started just about like that. I had a degree——

The President. Kitchen table.

Mr. Lamb. Yes, there you go. I had a degree in accounting—in fact, it was in economics—and didn't know a piece of steel from a two-by-four.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Lamb. That's how it started.

The President. I'm glad you learned. How many employees do you have now?

Mr. Lamb. We presently have 40 employees.

The President. Forty, good.

Mr. Lamb. We have grown—for 27 years, we have grown every year. We've had an increase in sales for 27 years, and we've increased our employees in that kind of direction.

The President. That's great. So did you add employees this year?

Mr. Lamb. We've added three new employers this year.

The President. Great. Here's what's happening in America: Small businesses are adding employees all across the country. He's put on three. I suspect some of you ought there who has got a small business might have added some. This economy—when you hear me say, "It's strong and getting stronger," it's because the small-business sector is alive and well and it's vibrant.

Let me tell you something interesting about Wayne's business. He is called a Subchapter S corporation. That is an accounting term, or legal term—legal term.

Mr. Lamb. Yes, it's a legal term.

The President. Legal term, yes. You and I aren't lawyers.

Mr. Lamb. No, sir.

The President. A Subchapter S corporation, like a sole proprietorship, pays taxes at the individual income-tax level. So when we reduced all rates, individual income-tax rates, we're helping Subchapter S corporations like Wayne's.

Now, did it help you? The tax relief help at all? I'm sure—that's called leading the witness. [*Laughter*] "Yes, it helped, Mr. President." [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lamb. Yes, it helped. [*Laughter*]

The President. Let me tell you something. Listen to that rhetoric of this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who promised about $2 trillion—well, I think maybe a little more than $2 trillion thus far—of new spending. So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich. We're going to raise the top two brackets." That's called taxing the rich.

And guess who he taxes? He taxes Wayne. By running up the top two brackets, he's taxing nearly a million, about 900,000, Subchapter S corporations and sole proprietorships. Just as our economy is gaining strength, my opponent wants to run the taxes up on nearly a million small businesses, which is going to make it hard for this guy to add employees. If you're taking money out of his treasury, if he's sending money to Washington, not reinvesting in his company, it's less likely he's going to add people. Raising taxes is the wrong thing to do right now in America.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay, got a little work to do. Hold on here. We've got work to do. Sorry, thanks. Thanks for the "4 more years." We can do that at the end. [*Laughter*]

One of the things we did in the tax relief act was to encourage investment by small businesses. We allowed for bonus depreciation and extra expensing. Those, again, are accounting terms, which basically say to a fellow like Wayne, "If you invest, there's going to be incentive for you to do so."

Are you investing?

Mr. Lamb. Yes. In the last 3 years, we have taken advantage of that $200,000 cap that we can take off immediately off the large pieces of equipment. And by doing that, we've actually been able to buy the next piece quicker. Plus, that has also improved our productivity so well, and also, it made our job safer for our employees.

The President. Yes, what did you buy, for example?

Mr. Lamb. Well, 3 years ago, we bought a Behringer saw-handling. It saws materials. It's a complete handling system. It was almost $300,000. And what we used to do in a week on our other saw, which we thought was the cat's meow, what it would do then, this saw will do in less than a day.

The President. Yes, so he buys a saw. The tax relief says, "Why don't you go think about buying new equipment." He makes the decision to go buy new equipment. Somebody has to make the new equipment. See, when—what we've done is we've increased demand through good tax policy. So Wayne says, "I need a piece of new equipment." He files an order, and the guy who takes the order says, "Okay, I'm going to make it for you." It may mean that he has to add an employee to make that equipment for Wayne. That's how the economy works.

When you hear the word "investment," it means somebody is buying something, which means somebody has to make it. And so the Tax Code encouraged decisionmakers all across the country to increase demand for goods and services. That's what you're hearing in this discussion. That's what this is all about. And as a result, the economy is growing. And the fundamental question, are we going to keep the tax relief in place? I think we should. I think we ought to encourage small-business growth.

You done? You did good, Wayne. Thank you. He hired Steve Platt. Steve, thanks for coming.

Steve Platt. Thank you.

The President. Steve's brother is coming back from Iraq in 2 days. I told him when he saw him, after he gave him the hug, tell him we're all proud of him.

Mr. Platt. I will. I definitely will.

The President. Steve's with us because he's working here for Wayne. And it's an interesting story. He had a job, and then you decided to——

Mr. Platt. I went back to college.

The President. Went back to college. And where did you go first?

Mr. Platt. I went to State Fair—got my associate's degree at State Fair Community College.

The President. You're the guy who's working. You were working for——

Mr. Platt. Duke Manufacturing.

The President. Yes, and decided to go back to college. Why did you make that decision?

Mr. Platt. Well, my children—I'm on them about wanting to send them to college and the understanding of the importance of going back to school, and I didn't feel like—if I didn't finish something I started, I couldn't very well express that, that I wanted them to do it.

The President. He made a tough choice, when you think about it. And there's a lot of people in this society of ours and this changing world who are faced with the same choice, you know. "Do I make a decision to go back to a community college"—and he eventually went to a 4-year college—"and upgrade my skills?" And that's hard in a changing world. I know it's hard in a changing world. I think the role of Government is to help. It's to help people, encourage people, to go back and get an associate degree, in Steve's case, or—and he went on to a 4-year, right?

Mr. Platt. Four-year at MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe.

The President. There you go. See, what he's done is, he's upgraded his skills, which makes him a more productive worker. So when you hear the talk about productivity, it means people have got additional skills, and our job base is changing.

You know, I went down to—I've been to North Carolina a lot and went down there. The textile industry has been hurting down there. They've lost some jobs in the textile industry. But the health care industry is booming. So you've got one kind of job replacing another. And the fundamental role of Government, I think, is to make college—community colleges accessible to programs which will train people for the jobs which exist.

And so what Steve has done is he went back, got a little help from some loans?

Mr. Platt. Yes, definitely.

The President. The Government is loaning money. It should. Government provides Pell grants. It will. But as well—like, you told me you're making a little more money in the new job?

Mr. Platt. Yes, I've earned more money, the benefits are better, the company pays 100 percent of——

The President. See, he upgraded his skills. He's making 10,000 more a year than he did before by going back to college, by going to the community college in his neighborhood. Community colleges work well. They work well because they take people who have got one skill set and help them with a new skill set. And people make more money when you become more productive in our society.

Tax relief helped him too. See, one of the things about the tax relief is that it helps people like Steve.

Mr. Platt. In 2003, we earned $1,800. In 2004, it will be $2,200.

The President. See, he saved 1,800. And in '04 he saved 2,200. Now, I know that doesn't sound like a lot to the budgeters in Washington, DC. But here's a fellow whose wife is working, and he's gone back to school, and I expect that $4,000 came in handy over the last 2 years, didn't it?

Mr. Platt. Yes, definitely.

The President. And the issue is—and the issue in this campaign is and the issue confronting Congress now is, do we make this tax relief permanent, or does it go away? I'm for making it permanent, so people like him can keep their money.

See, I believe Government—as a matter of fact, I know Government—if Government is wise about how we spend your money, we can set priorities and meet those priorities. But I think once we meet those priorities, people like Steve can spend his money a lot better than the Federal Government can spend his money. That's part of my philosophy.

We've got another person who saved money on her taxes, Ellyn Wilson. Thanks for coming, Ellyn. Tell us what you do, Ellyn. Interesting job she's got—interesting jobs she's got.

Ellyn Wilson. Mr. President, I work three jobs. I'm a single mom, which is a full-time job, anyway.

The President. Is that your daughter?

Ms. Wilson. Yes, this is Hannah.

The President. Listen to your mom. I'm still listening to mine—most of the time. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Wilson. And this is my son, Caleb Wilson. He's eight.

The President. Fantastic. What do you do, Mom?

Ms. Wilson. I am a music teacher. This is my 14th year starting. That's my full-time position.

The President. Thank you for teaching.

Ms. Wilson. And I made a change this year, and I'm presently at Pettis County R-12 Dresden School District, one of the best schools in the State of Missouri.

The President. That's good. She's a marketer. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Wilson. And my part-time job is out of my home. I'm a Mary Kay consultant, and I'm working my way up to a star recruiter and working my way up in the business.

The President. Running her own business. She's a sole proprietor. Got her own business—kind of the American way, isn't it? Started her business out of her own home. Keep going.

Ms. Wilson. And I love to serve the Lord at what I do, and I'm church pianist at First Baptist Church, Sedalia, Missouri.

The President. There you go. She saved $1,000 on tax relief. A single mom—by the way, being a single mom in America is the toughest job in our country. It's incredibly hard work to be a single mom. The tax relief helps single moms—$1,000.

Ms. Wilson. And I got braces for my kids. It's helped a lot.

The President. Let's see—oh, yes. [*Laughter*] Did you ever. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Wilson. With my Mary Kay supplies as well. So it really helped out tremendous, and I'm very thankful.

The President. Helped her small—helped with the kids. She's doing her job as a mom, to take care of her kids. And then she's got a little business going. And that money helps. Someday you'll be driving that pink Cadillac. If they don't make the tax relief permanent, $300 goes out of her pocket. That's 300 she can use. Remember the tax relief, how it works? Not only did we reduce all rates, which helped everybody in our small businesses; we raised the child credit to $1,000, and we reduced the marriage penalty. The Code ought to be encouraging marriage, not discouraging marriage.

We created a 10-percent bracket, which helps Ellyn. In other words, we've just got to keep this in mind, our country's got to keep in mind, what tax relief has meant to working people, to people who are trying to get ahead in life. This is a perfect example of a soul who is working hard to do her duty as a mom and to realize her dreams as a small-business owner. The tax relief has helped. I appreciate you coming.

I hope you get what I'm trying to say here. See, we can get people like me running for office, and we talk about numbers and this, that, and the other. The most effective way to explain the effects of tax relief on our society is to ask people like Ellyn come and tell you why tax relief was effective. I'm honored you're here, Ellyn. Great job. Thank you.

Ms. Wilson. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Before I talk about how to make the world a safer place, I want to ask Dr. Don Allcorn, who is with us today, to stand up. I've asked Don to come today because we have an issue in this country. We've got an issue with these frivolous lawsuits that are making it difficult for people to practice medicine. And this just isn't in the case in Missouri, this is all over the country. I'm telling you, too many good docs are getting sued time and time and time again by frivolous lawsuits which, make no mistake about it, runs your cost up. It also makes it harder for you to find a good doc, and we need to do something about this in this country.

I want to—Don, what kind of medicine do you practice?

Don Allcorn. I'm in family practice in Lincoln, which is about 20 miles south of here. It's a town of about 900.

The President. Nine hundred.

Dr. Allcorn. Nine hundred.

The President. Well, that's—about 3 times bigger than Crawford.

Dr. Allcorn. That's right. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, thanks for coming. And so, give us—tell people what it's like. I mean——

Dr. Allcorn. I've always—my dream, as I was going through undergraduate and then medical school, was to practice in a small town, raise a family there. I think it's a good place to be.

The President. Is this your family here?

Dr. Allcorn. I have my family here with me.

The President. Beautiful family.

Dr. Allcorn. Four daughters and my lovely wife.

The President. She sure is.

Dr. Allcorn. My wife has a master's degree in nursing education, and she chose to be a stay-at-home mom and has done that for the last 19 years.

The President. Good. And so, what is it like to practice medicine in the modern era? I mean, you said something—he was telling me that when he first got going, he was able to practice without fear of being sued.

Dr. Allcorn. It's a real issue these days. I could not practice in Lincoln today had I not already started 19 years ago, because the cost of medicine is so high. And part of the reason for that is medical liability.

The President. Yes. So what are you paying—I mean, your premiums are high. Explain to people what it means to practice medicine defensively.

Dr. Allcorn. Defensively means that if—for example, this morning, I had a lady in the hospital that I know her pneumonia's better. I can hear it. It sounds better, but her chest X-ray didn't look that way. It looked like it had not changed. So I kept her an extra day or two just to make sure the chest X-ray is better. The reason is because if someday I ever go to court, then I will be able to prove on paper, from the chest X-ray report, that that lady is better.

The President. Yes. See, what he's saying is, is that if you practice medicine and you're afraid you're going to get sued, you will spend more than necessary to protect yourself in a court of law. That's just the reality of the society we live in.

When I first got to Washington, I said, "Well, maybe medical liability is not a national issue." Then they told me how much the defensive practice of medicine costs our Treasury. Think about it. When you've got docs all over the country prescribing extra so in case they get sued, they've got a good case in court, it runs up your veterans' bills. It runs up your Medicare bills. It runs up your Medicaid bills. It costs the U.S. Treasury a lot of money, and therefore, I said, "Wait a minute. Medical liability reform is a national issue that requires a national solution."

We have a problem in this country, and it's a major difference in this campaign. The problem is, the trial lawyers are making it hard for people to practice medicine. This town here—this guy provides a great service to the people of his town. You don't want it so that docs feel like they've got to quit medicine because it's too expensive and can't do their practice.

Talk to an ob-gyn these days. Find out what that's like. When these ob-gyns are getting sued right and left, it makes it awfully hard for a person to be able to find a doc to deliver the baby. And that's not right in our society. So I'm for medical liability reform.

I'm running against—I don't think you can choose. Here's the way I put it. You cannot choose between and doctor and a patient and a hospital and a trial lawyer. [*Laughter*] In other words, you can't be for all of them. You've got to choose. You've got to make a choice. The fellow I'm running against made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

You've got to make choices. I made mine. I'm for medical liability reform now, so good men, like this good doc, can do his job, can practice that which loves to do, is to heal lives without fear of a frivolous lawsuit running him out of business.

Thanks for coming.

Let me talk about how to keep America safer right quick, then I'll answer questions. I want to tell you some of the lessons I have learned and the country must learn about September the 11th. One, we face an enemy which is coldblooded, an enemy with which we cannot negotiate and hope for the best. See, you cannot talk sense into these people. These people are full of hatred. They're ideologues that use terror as a weapon, and

they're trying to shake our will. They're trying to play upon our conscience. They don't have a conscience. They go into a Russian schoolhouse and mow down young kids. And the only way to deal with them is to find them and bring them to justice around the world so we don't have to face them here at home. [*Applause*]

And we must be—okay, hold on. All right. Thank you. I've got to keep working. I've got to keep working.

We must be strong and focused and unrelenting. Secondly, this is a different kind of war. It is a—I know there's a lot of vets here, and this is a different kind of war than you all were in. It's a war in which these people will hide in caves and lurk around in the cities and around the world and try to find safe harbor. So the second lesson is, is that we must not only find them—by the way, we're doing a good job. As I said in the speech the other night, three-quarters of known leaders of Al Qaida have been brought to justice, and we're on the hunt. We'll stay on the hunt.

But in order to make sure that they can't find safe haven, I issued a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." Now, when the President says something, I think it must be easy to understand and he must mean what he says. And I meant what I said.

And when the Taliban refused our demand for them to give up Al Qaida and to stop playing safe haven—providing safe haven, we led a coalition and removed them from power. And America is safer for it. The Al Qaida can no longer train there. They can no longer plan there. The people of Afghanistan are free. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror now. They're our friends when it comes to routing out those killers. They helped us find them.

But something else is taking place there too, as well, which will mean our children and grandchildren can grow up in a more peaceful world that we all hope for, and that is, Afghanistan is moving toward democracy. It's an amazing thing for a President to be able to say. It wasn't all that long ago that that country was run by the Taliban. These are the kind of people that would take a woman in the public square and whip her because she didn't toe the line. They were dim-viewed. They're—had a dark vision of the world, and now light has arrived in Afghanistan in the form of a free society.

Many young girls weren't allowed to go to school in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago, in Cleveland, Ohio, I welcomed athletes to the International Children's Games. And right to my right was the Afghan girl's soccer team. They were there because they had been freed. Young girls are going to school there now the first—for the first time. Three years isn't very long, when you think about it. But 3 years after the Taliban were removed from power, 10 million citizens in Afghanistan registered to vote—10 million. It's an amazing thought, isn't it. They're going to have Presidential elections this October. The people are going to be allowed to go to the polls and say, who—"Here's who I want to be President in my country." An amazing thing has happened.

The third lesson is, is that we must deal with threats before they fully materialize. That's one of the serious lessons of September the 11th. You know, prior to September the 11th, we would see a threat somewhere and say, "Oh, we don't need to deal with that, because it's not going to come home to hurt us." That's what we thought. That's what the history had taught us, that we're protected. But that changed on that day, and it's really important for the American President and the American people to understand that when we see a threat, that we must have to take it seriously. We must deal with it before it comes to hurt us.

And that's what led me to go to the United States Congress about Saddam Hussein. See, I saw a threat. And the reason I saw one, because he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. And the worst thing that could possibly happen is there be a connection between weapons of mass destruction and terrorist networks that we know want to inflict harm on us. He had paid—when I say harbored terrorists, Abu Nidal, his organization, were there. He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. He's a terrorist. This guy, Zarqawi, was in Baghdad. He's the guy that chops people's heads off on TV and hopes to cause us to tremble and

shirk from our duty. Saddam Hussein subsidized the families of suicide bombers. It's a terrorist act when somebody goes and kills the innocent. And he invaded his neighbors. He was shooting missiles at our pilots. That guy was a threat.

And so I went to the Congress, and the Congress agreed. As a matter of fact, they passed a resolution. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, the very same intelligence. They passed a resolution that authorized the use of force.

My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at and made some pretty strong statements about the threat of Saddam Hussein. He voted "yes" when it came to the authorization of force.

Now, before a President commits troops, it's necessary to try to solve problems peacefully. I want you to know that. We spent time going to the United Nations, because I was hopeful that we could deal with this threat diplomatically. And I gave a speech there and laid out our case about Saddam Hussein being a threat. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and they looked at the history. They remembered the history I remembered and passed by 15-to-nothing a Security Council resolution that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

The free world spoke loud and clear, but as he had for over a decade, he ignored the demands. It's like, "Go ahead and talk, I'm not interested in listening." He wasn't interested in the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, he deceived the inspectors that the U.N. sent into his country. In other words, they said, "Well, we'll send inspectors in," and he deceived them. And we all knew that.

So at this point in our history, after diplomacy failed, I had a choice to make. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best when it came to the decisions of a madman, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

We didn't find the stockpiles we thought we would find, but Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons. He could have passed that capability on to the enemy, and that's a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision.

Fourth lesson: We put—when we put our troops in harm's way, they deserve the full support of our Government. That's why I went to the United States Congress September of '03 and asked for supplemental funding to support our troops in combat, $87 billion worth. We received great support, overwhelming support—as a matter of fact, so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As a matter of fact, my opponent and his runningmate were two of four Senators who voted for the authorization of force and then voted against funding our troops. We have a difference of opinion on this issue when it comes to supporting troops in combat. So they asked him why. And he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it," you know. I don't know if they talk that way in the coffee shops here in Sedalia, Missouri. [*Laughter*] "Yes, no." And then they kept pressing him, and he said, "Well, it's a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. Let me tell you what that means. I think liberty can change societies and promote the peace. Our short-term strategy is to help these countries achieve—get on the road to democracy and stability, is to train Iraqis and Afghans so they can do the work necessary to defend freedom. And we'll get that done as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they've earned.

But the long-term strategy is to spread freedom. Let me tell you some interesting—a story about that that maybe will help illustrate the point I'm trying to make. You know, I've spent a lot of time in the past with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. And I like him a lot. He's a good guy. His favorite singer was Elvis. [*Laughter*]

So, it's interesting, though, just to remember it wasn't all that long ago—what, 60 years ago, I guess—that we were at war with the

Japanese. My dad, your husbands, dads, grandfathers fought in the same war against Japan. It was a bloody war. Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States of America, and we were fighting them. And here I am, 60 years later, sitting down with this guy, strategizing about the peace.

What happened was, is that after World War II, Harry Truman and the State of Missouri and other Americans believed in the capacity for liberty to transform societies, believed that a free society would convert the Japanese people from enemies to friends. That's what they believed. And as a result of that belief and as a result of staring down the skeptics and the critics—and you can understand why people were skeptical after World War II about Japan becoming an ally in peace. We just fought them. You know, moms and dads had lost a son in combat, and they're saying to themselves, "You think liberty is going to transform these people?" But they—but my predecessor did and others did.

As a result of believing in the power of liberty, Prime Minister Koizumi and I sit down and talk about how to keep the peace on the Korean Peninsula. We talk about Iraq and how a free Iraq will make the world a more peaceful place. What's going to happen someday is that when America keeps faith with our belief in liberty, an American President is going to sit down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be better off.

It's hard work. I know there's people who are skeptical about whether or not it will happen. Just remember what I told you about Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that four women were pulled off a bus by the Taliban and killed because they're—I think they were registering to vote, themselves, or helping others to register. And people said, "Oh no, there goes the elections." Since that day, millions have shown up to vote.

Freedom is a powerful—freedom is powerful. Iraq will have elections in January. It wasn't all that long ago that Saddam Hussein was torturing and killing the people of Iraq, and now they're headed toward Presidential elections—or prime—or elections for their Prime Minister. It's amazing what happens.

You know why I feel so strongly about the power of liberty? It's because I believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. That's what I believe.

These are historic times we're living in. These are historic times we're living in. The free societies in Afghanistan and Iraq are going to affect the neighborhood that's desperate for freedom. Think about the example they're going to set. Women will say, "Look at the free women of Iraq. Why can't we be free?" Young boys are going to say, "Look, there's a free society in our neighborhood, and why do I want to strap bombs on as a suicider?" Reformers, political prisoners, are going to say, "Wait a minute. The United States is standing true to its belief that all people ought to be free." Free societies there are going to serve as powerful examples. They're going to promote freedom in other countries, and that part of the world needs freedom. The long-term solution, so our children can grow up in a free world, is never forget the power of liberty to transform societies.

That's why I'm running again. That's why I'm out asking for the vote. A couple of more things, then I'll answer questions. In a changing world, things won't change, the values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity. We stand for some things. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundation of our societies. We stand for a culture of life in which everybody matters and every being counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench.

I'm coming today to ask for the vote and tell you there's a reason why, and I hope you got a better feel for why I'd like to serve this country for 4 more years. And if you give me the chance to do so, I'll uphold the honor and dignity of the office to which I've been elected. [*Applause*]

Let me answer some questions. Not yet. I've got some time for some questions, then we've got head on the bus here. Anybody got any questions? Yes, sir.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. All right, well, that's not a question, that's a request. [*Laughter*] I'll

sign it, so long as you go out and register somebody to vote.

Yes, sir.

France and Germany/International Cooperation

Q. Do our previous allies remember us, such as France and Germany? Thank you.

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. First of all, we put together coalitions. In Afghanistan, for example, there's French Special Forces that have been helping our Special Forces find Al Qaida. We've been working together in Haiti. Haiti had a problem, and we provided some stability forces, along with the Canadians and the French. So there are places where we are working together.

As a matter of fact, I put together what's called the Proliferation Security Initiative, which is a 60-nation coalition, all aimed at intercepting the flow of technologies so that weapons of mass destruction don't get in the hands of our enemies. I don't know if you remember when we busted the A.Q. Khan network. This is a guy who was a fellow out of Pakistan that was selling technologies to North Korea and Iran. And we intercepted a ship—we, the coalition, intercepted a ship of materials aimed at Libya, which helped us make the case to Colonel Qadhafi, which caused him to make another decision about whether or not he was going to have weapons of mass destruction.

We work with Germany on a lot of causes as well. They just didn't agree with me on Iraq. They did on a first resolution, but when it came time to define serious consequences, they made a different choice. But our coalition was a strong one going into Iraq, you know. We shouldn't denigrate the contributions of our allies. My opponent called them "the coerced and the bribed." That's denigrating allies.

Tony Blair is a standup guy. The people of England are putting troops in combat. The Australians were there, Prime Minister Howard. The Poles went with us. Now there's nearly 30 nations involved in Iraq. These aren't the coerced and bribed; these are the brave and the dedicated to peace and freedom. We'll put coalitions together, and we'll work with alliances. I'll never turn over our national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Yes, ma'am. Okay, we—either way. You're next. Be thinking of a good question. You already got it? Okay.

Support for Families of Fallen Soldiers

Q. Mr. President, I know a lot of our boys are not going to come home because they are giving up their lives for what we truly believe in in America. What are we going to do for their families that are left behind?

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. The first thing we'll do is support them with our prayers. And there will be survivor benefits. I've met with a lot of the families to whom you refer, and I've been struck by their incredible courage and strength. My promise to them is that we will complete the mission so that their child or their husband or wife has not died in vain. And that mission is to leave behind a better world.

It's really important that our—that we never send mixed signals to our troops in harm's way or mixed signals to the Iraqi citizens who wonder whether or not we've got what it takes to stay the line, see. What I like to do is, I don't like to put artificial timetables out there because of politics. My—I say to the—I say to our troops and I say to the enemy and I say to the Iraqis, we will be there until the mission is finished, and then we're coming home.

Every life matters. And it is—there's been some incredible bravery and sacrifice made. And I will do my best to assure those loved ones that the personal sacrifice will mean this world is a more peaceful place, because I think that's what's happening.

Yes, ma'am? Fire away.

Flexibility Under the No Child Left Behind Act

Q. I have a daughter that's a fifth-grade teacher just north of Columbia, and she's very concerned about your no-child-left-behind policy.

The President. Why?

Q. She says, what about behavior-disordered children and the learning-disabled children?

The President. I appreciate that. What she's asking me is, "Well, you have an accountability system. Shouldn't there be a different standard for certain children?" In other words, should the accountability system be flexible? And the answer is: Yes, it should be and is. You know, you can't expect a child that who can't speak English as a first language to immediately be able to adapt to the education system. And so the system shows flexibility, as it should.

By the way, these systems are designed by the citizens of each State. These aren't Federal tests. All the Federal Government is saying is, "We've increased your funding by 49 percent since 2001 for K through 12, and now you show us, not only Federal people, but everybody, whether or not a child can read." And you bet there's a flexibility in the assessments. So you tell her, there's flexibility in the assessment system.

But I will tell you something, I'm not going to yield when it comes to assessment. A system that doesn't assess is a system that just shuffles kids through, and that's unacceptable. It's not a—and believe me, you know, as a former Governor, I've heard it all. You know, "Oh, they're just teaching the test." I've heard that. But I—you know, when you teach a child to read, they pass the test. Or, "All they're doing is taking tests all the time." Well, that's not true. They're learning how to be able to read; otherwise they can't pass the test.

We should not allow the excusemaking to weaken accountability. Accountability saves lives. Accountability reinforces whether or not a school district is doing the right thing. Accountability will tell us whether or not there needs to be changes. Accountability will let us know that the teacher is doing a fabulous job. Accountability says to parents, "Here's the standing of your school." Accountability allows one district to compare to another. Accountability is healthy and necessary for excellence in every classroom in the United States of America.

Got a question? Yes. Future Farmer of America, there you go.

Military Draft/Reconfiguration of U.S. Forces

Q. Mr. President, if the war on terrorism continues, do you feel that there will be a need for the draft? And do you want to start the draft again?

The President. Yes, first of all, the war on terror will continue. It's going to take awhile. And no, we don't need a draft. What we need to do is—don't worry about it. What we need to do is to make sure our troops are well-paid and well-housed and well-equipped.

And that's why over the last 3½ years we've increased military pay by 21 percent. And that's why our housing is better. We've improved housing. You see, you keep a soldier in the military by appealing to his family or her family. When the housing is good, when the health is good, they stay. When the pay is decent, they stay.

And so therefore, in making a volunteer army work, it's best to treat our soldiers with the best we possibly can. And we made great progress in doing just that. No, I'm—we don't need the draft. We don't need a draft at all.

I'll tell you what else we need to do is we need to transform our military. And let me tell you what that means. A little flap came up the other day when I announced that we're going to reconfigure our troops, in Europe, for example. Now, our troop strength in Europe was set when the Soviet Union was an enemy. Well, the Soviet Union doesn't exist anymore. And so, therefore, our troop strength in Europe needs to reflect the threats of the 21st century.

We can replace people with a lighter, more mobile military. In other words, the heavy—let me rephrase it. We can replace divisions of heavy armament and, therefore, people with fewer people and equipment which can move lighter and more lethal. We've changed our military since the day in which the Soviet was a threat. It is lighter, more agile, easier to move. And therefore, we can reconfigure, transform how we meet the threats of the 21st century.

That will take pressure off our troops at home, by the way. Cycling deployments is

a strain on families. And so hopefully we'll have a more stable military so moms don't have to move their children from school to school to school and that people will be based in—more likely to stay in one base longer.

Our military is different. It is being converted into a force that can move just like that, very quickly, you know, light units but are lethal. And that's necessary to defend against the enemy which exists.

And so that's how you make sure you don't need a draft, is to make the military perform better and take care of the people in the military.

Yes, ma'am. Hold on. We've got to crank that thing up.

English Language Skills

Q. You talk about accountability in reading. Will you please require that our schools teach English? And will you rescind President Clinton's Executive order so that they can read a ballot in English and not have ballots and other driver's license and Social Security all in whatever language they—is their home language?

The President. Yes, well, listen, I think, look—no question—the accountability systems in schools are based on English. In other words, we expect kids to read English. When I was the Governor of Texas, I supported what's called "English Plus." English is necessary to be able to realize dreams in our society, plus additional language. But I think we are—I think it's pretty clear in America that you've got to speak English in order to be able to succeed here.

And so the schools are based—when he mentioned the accountability system, they are based on English. And it's going to take a while to help transition certain kids. We've got a society in which people are coming here to work. They're working the farms. They're working the meat plants. And a lot of times their children don't speak English, and so the function of a school is to help them learn to speak English. And ours is a society based on English, but we've got to recognize that a diverse society is one in which other languages are learned and spoke as well, but English is the primary language.

Yes.

Prayers for the President/Religious Freedom

Q. Hi.

The President. Hi. You're not nervous, are you?

Q. No, how can I be? This is an answered prayer for me to get to speak to you.

The President. [*Laughter*] Well, thanks for coming.

Q. This is a comment to encourage you. We here in the heartland, I think, are responsible for being the anchor, and we know that there is a lot of trends on both coasts, but we try to stay steady, and we try to do what we feel is the right thing. And I want to tell you that I believe I can be a Christian representative and say there's a whole bunch of people praying for you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. There are those here that will know what I mean what I say that. In my prayers over the last 3 years, I am definitely impressed that you've been chosen for this time.

And finally, I don't want you to worry about those weapons of mass destruction. They're going to find them. They're there.

The President. Thank you very much. Thanks. I appreciate your prayers a lot. Let me make a comment about religion. First of all, the prayers help a lot, and I thank you for that. It means a lot to me and Laura that people would pray for us.

Ours is a society that is based upon the ability for people to worship or not worship, if that's what they choose to do. It's really an important part of the American tradition and history and future, and I believe that.

We need to be serving the example in a world that says, "If you worship, you're a patriot. If you don't worship, you're a patriot. And if you do worship, you can worship any way you see fit." It's really one of the most important traditions of our country. It serves as such a wonderful example that—around the world—we value the freedom to choose how we want to worship, and the great thing about our country is that it's that freedom, and we'll guard that. The other thing that's—about our country which is true, there's a lot of people who have chosen to pray for me and Laura, and I can't thank people enough for that. It's the sustaining aspect of

our life, and we're very grateful for that. Thank you.

2004 Election

Q. First of all, I have to say, my mom said to tell you she loves you.

The President. Your mom said that?

Q. My mom said that. She couldn't be here today.

The President. Tell her thanks.

Q. I appreciate so much the choice of your runningmate. A lot was made over John Edwards' great head of hair when he decided to accept the nomination, but I would take Dick Cheney's cute little smirk over that great head of hair any day of the year. [*Laughter*]

The President. He's a steady guy, Dick Cheney. I really like him. We're close, and he's a good guy, really good guy.

Q. Any chance he'll run in '08?

The President. Pardon me?

Q. Any chance that he will run in '08?

The President. Oh, no, listen, we've got to get through '04. [*Laughter*]

Q. That's a done deal. '04's a done deal.

The President. No, no done deal. Well, I appreciate that. I have no idea about '08. I will tell you, we are—Dick and I are focused on November of '04. We're traveling hard, working hard, and balancing time on the road with time we need to spend in Washington to do our jobs. And tomorrow, I'm going to spend the morning in Washington. I'll be meeting with Members of Congress. I'll be meeting with my national security team. And then I'm going to head on down to Florida and try to comfort as best I can the people whose lives, once again, have been affected by natural disaster.

But no, I'm—thanks for talking about '08, but it's just kind of—don't forget about right now, you know? [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir. A couple of more questions, and we've got to go. Yes, sir.

Veterans' Health Benefits

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Good.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, I am. He's asking about veterans' health benefits. Let me just give you the record. We have spent more in 4 years on veterans'—we have increased veterans' benefits in 4 years by more than the predecessor did in 8 years. In other words, in the 4 years I've been President, we've increased spending by more than my predecessor did, one. Two, I told the people, I said, "If I'm in, we'll reduce the waiting time necessary for the veterans." We've done that. Three, we're making sure that the veterans' hospitals and clinics meet the needs. A lot of veterans are moving kind of—the central part of our country down to the South and the West, and those veterans' clinics and hospitals need to be upgraded around the country, where the veterans live. And so you're seeing us now match assets with need.

We've increased the number of people receiving pharmaceuticals on the veterans' list. The answer is, yes, sir, we have a duty to our veterans. We'll keep our commitment to our veterans.

Got one?

Federal Highways Legislation/Tone in Washington

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to thank you for your comments on the Faith-Based Initiative. I'm certainly for that.

But my family is involved in trucking here in Missouri, and I was wondering what you, as President, could do with Federal money to upgrade our highways. Our trucks are falling apart because our highways are falling apart.

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. We're in the midst of a discussion on a highway bill. I just want to make sure that the highway bill is a fair bill. We've put out a number we thought was fair, and we're working with the Congress to meet the number. And hopefully, we'll get it done. You know, there's a—either get the highway bill a 6-year extension, or they may just decide to go with a 1-year extension and work it out later on. There will be a highway bill, and just want to make sure that the highway bill honors the Highway Trust Fund. The Highway Trust Fund is set up so that we use the money from the gasoline tax and not general

revenues. And I think it's very important that we guard that aspect of the trust, keep the trust of the trust fund.

And that's why we're having the discussions we're having, and you know, we'll see if we can get a bill done. There will be a lot of discussions here in the next 1 month. It's hard to get things done this year coming down the stretch because there's a lot of politics in Washington. [*Laughter*] It's a town that—I've been frankly amazed at the zero-sum attitude in that town. "We can't do this because Bush might look good," or "We can't do this because so-and-so would do this, make him look bad." I mean, it's not the right way, but that's the way it is.

I've worked hard to try to change the tone there, and I admit it's hard to do. But I'm going to keep trying. The President's job is to lead the whole Nation. I understand not everybody's for me. I believe over 50 percent will be, but not everybody is. And therefore—but I still have the responsibility to be the President of everybody, and I will. And I—you know, I will try to do my best to work with people in the other party to get things done. But I can't guarantee much will get done between now and the election because it's pretty partisan up there right now. They—it's real partisan up there right now. [*Laughter*] That's just reality.

Last question, sir, and then I've got to go. I've got to get on the bus.

International Cooperation

Q. What a pleasure, Mr. President, to actually face and see my Commander in Chief.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. My question is, why are the French so ungrateful for what all we have done for that nation, especially in the past?

The President. The who?

Q. The French.

The President. Oh, yes. Yes. Well, I'm getting the picture here today of—[*laughter*]—look, we've got a—we just try to work with everybody as best we can, you know, and if they—if—I'm just not going to let anybody veto our policy, if we do what we think is right and lead the world in the cause of freedom and peace and try to work with everybody, you know, try to bring people along. And by far—a lot of nations are working with us so far. We've got good coalitions, and I'm not going to touch that. [*Laughter*]

All right, one more question, then I've got to go. Got one? Okay. Now, I promise, she's the last one.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know. We've got to go down the road.

President's Autograph

Q. Mr. President, my question was on the draft. Thank you for answering that. But if at all possible, could I have your autograph, please? [*Laughter*]

The President. Tough question. Where's the guy with the hat? Oh, there he is. Okay, get the hat, get the vest.

Who's got one? Okay, go ahead.

Whiteman Air Force Base

Q. Mr. President, 20 years ago, Ronald Reagan spoke in Sedalia, right here in this building.

The President. Really? Right here? You've got to be kidding. Isn't that something. I'm honored to be following in his footsteps again.

Q. My question is——

The President. How old were you then?

Q. Me?

The President. Yes.

Q. Twenty-six. I guess everybody knows how old I am. [*Laughter*] My question is, Whiteman Air Force Base and the stealth bomber are very important to the local economy here. And we've got a pretty good Representative that's done a good job sticking up for Whiteman. Trouble is, he's a Democrat. But that's okay; he's done a good job in that. The problem is, he came to town on an alleged whistlestop tour with his buddy, who's running against you. And we're talking about the Presidential election now, folks. So how is Whiteman Air Force Base and it's impact on our economy going to be different under you than under your opponent?

The President. Well, you've seen how it is under me. You know, when I'm talking about a military that's transforming, the stealth was part of that transformation. It was

the leading edge of the transformation. I remember those stories about the pilots loading up here in Missouri, flying over and delivering ordnances and coming home. Now, that's the—that's a military which has been transformed.

And so the stealth was on the leading edge of transformation. It's a new way to approach how to keep the peace, and the fact that we've got the capacity to fly long-range out of our country to deliver ordnance and come back home is—reflects what I'm talking about. In other words, the military has got to be lethal, easier to move, and stealthy, in this case.

And so I'm—people have seen how I've used our military up to now. We're going to make it stronger as time goes on by reconfiguring. It makes these home bases more important. And I appreciate you bringing that up.

Listen, I do have to go, otherwise the people will be waiting. I hate to keep people waiting.

God bless you. Thanks for your time. Get out and vote.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. at the Missouri State Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to William H.T. "Bucky" Bush, Missouri State chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Charles E. Kruse, president, board of directors, Missouri Farm Bureau; Mayor Robert Wasson of Sedalia, MO; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia.

Remarks in Columbia, Missouri

September 7, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thanks for coming. I appreciate it. That's what I'm here to tell you: I'm ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years. It is great to be back in Columbia. It is nice to be here at the Boone County Fairgrounds. I was hoping to get a corny dog. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming.

We're taking a bus tour across your State. It's a great way to spend a Tuesday. I'll tell you why I'm here. I'm here to ask for the vote. I believe we've got to get out—I'm not only here to ask for the vote; I'm here to ask for your help. I think we have a duty in this country to vote, and I'm here to ask you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. And then after you get them registered to vote, head them to the polls. And as you get them going to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer country, a stronger country, a better country, put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

And by the way, when you're registering people, make sure you not only register Republicans and independents, but make sure you include discerning Democrats too. You might remember Zell Miller. He's a discerning Democrat, and there's a lot of folks like him all across this country. I appreciate you coming. It means a lot to me that you're here.

My only regret is that Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. Yes, I know it. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] Fortunately she didn't hold me to the promise. As you all saw, she is a—has got a lot of class. She is a great First Lady, a wonderful mom. I love her dearly. Perhaps the most important reason to put me back in there is so that she'll have 4 more years as the First Lady.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney as well. He's a fine Vice President. He doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. I didn't pick him for his hairdo. I picked him because he's a man of enormous experience and sound judgment, and he can get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud to be standing up here with Kenny. Congressman Hulshof is a fine, fine Member of the United States Congress. I appreciate it. I'm proud to call him friend.

I understand that Governor Blunt was here. I know Lieutenant Governor Kinder is

here. Good to see you, Peter. Thanks for coming. Pete's a good friend of mine, been a friend for quite a while.

I appreciate the speaker being here, Catherine Hanaway. And I appreciate the fact that Sarah Steelman was here. I want to thank all the other State and local officials. I appreciate your attendance.

I want to thank my uncle, Bucky Bush, from St. Louis, Missouri. He's here with us today.

I thank Ernie Lee, State veterans cochairman, is with us today. I appreciate you coming, Ernie. I want to thank Mark Wills, the country and western singer, for entertaining you here.

But most of all, thank you. I'm here to tell you, I'm looking forward to this campaign. I'm looking forward to telling you where I stand and what I believe and where I'll lead this country. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. See, I believe you've got to raise the bar. I believe you must assess early so you can solve problems before they're too late. I believe we've got to end this practice of simply shuffling the kids through the schools year after year, grade after grade, without learning the basics. I believe in local control of schools. And I know we're closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

We have a moral responsibility to honor our citizens with good health care. Medicare is a really important program, yet it wasn't modernizing like medicine was. For example, we were willing to pay—or did pay $100,000 for heart surgery but would not pay for the prescription drugs that would have prevented the heart surgery from happening in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. We've strengthened and modernized Medicare for our seniors. Beginning in 2006, all seniors can have prescription drugs in Medicare, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation of the American workers and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners, so we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation. When you're out gathering the vote, remind your friends and neighbors what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals, and we've been through that attack, which hurt our economy. But we're overcoming those obstacles. We're overcoming them because we're a great country. We're overcoming them because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We're overcoming them because we believe in the creativity of the workforce.

Last Friday, we received a jobs report that shows we added 144,000 new jobs in the month of August—1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is at 5.4 percent. That's a full point below the peak of last summer. It is lower than the average rate of the 1970s and the 1980s and the 1990s. Our economic stimulus plan is working.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. And I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that governments should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we will carry Missouri again and win a great victory in November.

The world in which we live is changing. You know, our dads and granddads generally had one job, one career; that company they worked for provided a pension plan and health benefits. The world we're living in is different. Women now work outside the home. They work in the home and outside the home. Many people are changing careers often. Yet many of the most fundamental systems, our Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday. They were

designed for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. And so we'll transform these systems. And we will do so so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices, so you can live your own dreams.

A hopeful society is one in which the economy is growing. And I have a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create jobs in America, we must stop the junk lawsuits that threaten our small-business owners. The cost to our economy of litigation is conservatively estimated to be over $230 billion a year.

We have a difference of opinion in this race. Now, I recognize my opponent changes positions a lot, but for 20 years, he's been one of the trial lawyers' most reliable friends. He's consistently voted against legal reform that protects our entrepreneurs and our workers. Fellow lawyers have responded with millions of dollars of donations for his campaign. I just disagree. See, I'm taking a different view. I believe we've got to stop those junk lawsuits. Personal injury lawyers shouldn't get richer at the expense of hard-working Americans.

To create jobs here in America, Congress needs to get an energy plan to my desk. I submitted a plan 2 years ago. It encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages clean coal technology and exploration for hydrocarbons in a sensitive way. To keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To create jobs here, we must reject economic isolationism and open up markets for U.S. goods and services. See, we open up our markets to other countries, which is good for you. It means you have more choices, and when you have more choices in the marketplace, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. So what we're telling other countries like China is, you treat us the way we treat you. American workers and farmers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level.

And one reason our ag economy is so strong today is because we're selling soybeans around the world, and we're selling corn around the world, and I intend to keep markets open so our farmers can make a good living.

We have a difference in this campaign on taxes. See, I believe in order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. I think running up the taxes on the people now would be a mistake. It would hurt our economic growth. The fellow I'm running against has proposed over $2 trillion of new Federal spending so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's awfully tempting, when you get out there, to tell people what they want to hear. So they asked him—they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, don't worry. I'll pay for it by taxing the rich." Well, first of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for all his promises. You know what that means. Secondly, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you? "Oh, don't worry, we'll just tax the rich." Well, the rich hire lawyers and accountants, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him. We're going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Let me say something else about the Tax Code. The Tax Code is a drag on our economy. It's a complicated mess. It's filled with special interest loopholes. It is estimated that the Tax Code burdens Americans with more than 6 billion hours of paperwork every year. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to simplify and reform the Federal Tax Code.

Listen, we've got to do more to keep jobs here in America. We've got to help people gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a strong believer in the community college system of America. And we'll help workers retrain in our community colleges. As well we will double the number of people served by our principal job training programs.

Most new jobs in America, by the way, are filled with people with at least 2 years of college. And yet, one in four of our students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students

at risk. We'll provide new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In changing times, we've got to do more to make health care available and affordable. See, most of the uninsured, one-half of the working uninsured, are employees of small businesses. Yet, small businesses are having trouble affording health care. And there are some reasons why. In order to make sure our families get the help they need, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

We will expand health savings accounts to help our small businesses and families. We will ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center. But to make sure that health care is available and affordable, we need medical liability reform in America. Let me tell you, these frivolous lawsuits against our docs are making it harder for good doctors to practice medicine, and they're running up the cost of your health care.

I met Mike Ditmore, sitting right there. He's a doc. He's a neurosurgeon. He was, until his premiums went up to $108,000 a year. These lawsuits drove him out of business. There's one less good doctor available for help here in the State of Missouri. I met doctors all over our country. Talk to your obgyns. Ask them what it's like to live in a world in which these junk lawsuits are making it hard for them to practice medicine. It's not right. We need medical liability reform now in America.

By the way, Dr. Ditmore is so upset about medical liability reform and other issues, he's running for the State senate to do something about it.

In all we do to help the folks in health care, we'll make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

I'll continue to promote ownership in America. See, during changing times, if you own something, it brings stability to your life. We want more people owning their own home. Do you realize the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high now? More people owning their home. We've got a plan to expand ownership. We want more people opening their front door and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

Another important part of ownership is our retirement system. If you're an older citizen, you don't have to worry about Social Security. The promise our Government made to you will be kept. If you're a baby boomer, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security. But we need to worry about our children and grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I hope the youngsters listen carefully to this debate about Social Security. See, I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their tax money and put it in a personal savings account, to make sure the Social Security system is available to them.

We have a difference when it comes to policy here at home. If you listen carefully, my opponent plans to expand Government. My plan is to expand opportunity, because I trust the American people.

In a world of change, there are some things that do not change, the values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity. In times of change, we'll support the institutions that bring stability to our society, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And we will advance—we will work to advance liberty around the world, because we know that freedom will bring a future of hope and peace that we all long for. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

The progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, we must think differently. America must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I remembered, and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and he voted for the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits our troops into combat, we must try all means to deal with the threat. So I was hoping diplomacy would work, and I went to the United Nations. And I said to the United Nations, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history we remembered. And they voted by a 15-to-nothing vote in the Security Council that said, "Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when the United Nations sent inspectors into Iraq, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice, a choice that only comes to the President, a choice no President wants to make but best be prepared to make it. And that is, do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, trust a madman, or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Because we defended to act—because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people now live in freedom. In Afghanistan—this is an amazing thought, at least it is for me. You know, the Taliban was running this country, and they wouldn't let young girls go to school. And if their moms stepped out of line, they whipped them in the public square and sometimes killed them. These guys were brutal. They were backward. They had a dim view of the world. Light is arising in Afghanistan. Ten million people have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. Amazing.

Despite ongoing acts of violence and despite the fact it wasn't all that long ago that a tyrant brutally ruled a country in Iraq, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January. The world is changing, and we will stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We are also serving a vital and historic cause that will make our country safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that makes America more secure and the world more peaceful.

So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders train their armies. We want Iraqis and Afghan citizens doing the hard work of defending freedom. We'll help them through their elections. We'll move—we'll get them on the path of

stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I am proud of our military. I have had the honor of meeting our men and women who wear the uniform here at home and around the world. I've seen their courage and their great decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands. And I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear today's uniform.

I made a commitment to our troops and to their loved ones. They will have the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why in September of '03, a year ago, I went to the United States Congress and requested $87 billion in funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, and supplies needed for our troops doing battle in Afghanistan and Iraq. And we received great support for that request. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding—[*laughter*]—2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they—do you realize this? Four United States Senators—only four—voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those four were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, "Why?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." And then they said, you know—he said, well, he's proud of it, and finally said, "It's just a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] That's what he said. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

A Commander in Chief must be steady, must have a clear vision, must speak clearly. My opponent has now voted for the war and against supplying our troops. When he got on in the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Most recently, he switched again, saying he would have voted for the war, even knowing everything we know today. And then in the last 2 days, he woke up with yet another new position, and this one isn't even his own. [*Laughter*] It's the one of Howard Dean. He even used the same words Howard Dean did back when he supposedly disagreed with him. [*Laughter*] Look, no matter how many times my opponent flip-flops, we were right to make America safer by removing Saddam Hussein from power.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies are making. It is wrong for my opponent to denigrate the contributions of our allies, people who are standing side by side with our men and women in uniform, risking their lives for freedom and peace. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to build alliances. We'll work together. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe the wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. You know, I've spent a lot of time with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. It wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that our dads and granddads were fighting the Japanese. They were a sworn enemy of America. And yet, because Harry Truman of Missouri and other folks during that period of time believed liberty could transform societies, Japan is free today.

See, there was a lot of skeptics during those days, I'm certain, that said, "How could an enemy ever be an ally? We just fought them." But people believed in power of liberty to change enemies to friends. And so today, I sit down with the head of a former enemy talking about the peace, talking about how to make the world more peaceful. Someday, a duly elected leader of Iraq is going to sit down with an American leader, and they'll be talking about the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe millions in the Middle East plead for liberty. I believe women want to be free. I believe that given the chance, the people of the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these—freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the

Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of government, the American people will be better able to realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the world in freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes!" I was doing my best to thank people and comfort them, and a guy grabbed me by the arm, he looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." As we did that day, he took it personally. I took it personally. You all took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote. I said if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help and hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

May God bless you. Thank you for coming. I appreciate it. Thank you all. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. at the Boone County Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Missouri Secretary of State Matt Blunt, candidate for Missouri Governor; Missouri State Senator Peter Kinder, candidate for Missouri Lieutenant Governor; Catherine L. Hanaway, speaker, Missouri House of Representatives; Missouri State Senator Sarah Steelman; William H.T. "Bucky" Bush, Missouri State chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Ernie Lee, cochairman, Missouri Veterans Leadership Team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Proclamation 7808—To Modify the Generalized System of Preferences, and for Other Purposes

September 7, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. Pursuant to sections 501 and 502(a)(1) of Title V of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act") (19 U.S.C. 2461, 2462(a)(1)), the President is authorized to designate countries as beneficiary developing countries for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

2. Pursuant to section 503(d) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2463(d)), the President may waive the application of the competitive need limitations in section 503(c)(2)(A) (19 U.S.C. 2463(c)(2)(A)) with respect to any eligible article from any beneficiary developing country if certain conditions are met.

3. Pursuant to section 503(d)(5) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2463(d)(5)), any waiver granted under section 503(d) shall remain in effect until the President determines that such waiver is no longer warranted due to changed circumstances.

4. Section 7(a) of the AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–274) ("AGOA Acceleration Act") amended section 506A of the GSP (19 U.S.C. 2466a) to provide certain benefits to any country designated as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country under section 506A(a) of the GSP that becomes a party to a free trade agreement with the United States, and amended section 506B of the GSP (19 U.S.C. 2466b) to extend the period during which preferential treatment may be accorded to such countries.

5. Section 7(b) through (f) of the AGOA Acceleration Act amended section 112 of the

African Growth and Opportunity Act (Title I of the Trade and Development Act of 2000, Public Law 106–200) (AGOA) (19 U.S.C. 3721) to modify the type and quantity of textile and apparel articles eligible for the preferential treatment now accorded to designated beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries, and to provide certain benefits to any such country that becomes a party to a free trade agreement with the United States.

6. On December 17, 1992, the Governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States entered into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The Congress approved the NAFTA in section 101(a) of the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (the "NAFTA Implementation Act") (19 U.S.C. 3311(a)), and the President implemented the tariff provisions of the NAFTA with respect to the United States in Proclamation 6641 of December 15, 1993.

7. Section 201(a) of the NAFTA Implementation Act (19 U.S.C. 3331(a)) authorizes the President to proclaim such duty modifications as the President may determine to be necessary or appropriate to carry out or apply, among other provisions, Article 308 and Annex 308.1 of the NAFTA.

8. NAFTA Article 308 and Annex 308.1 provide for each NAFTA Party to eliminate or reduce normal trade relations (most-favored-nation) rates of duty on certain automatic data processing machinery and parts, and set the terms under which such goods shall be considered originating goods under the NAFTA when imported from the territory of a NAFTA Party.

9. Pursuant to sections 501 and 502(a)(1) of the 1974 Act, and having due regard for the factors set forth in section 501 of the 1974 Act and taking into account the factors set forth in section 502(c) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2462(c)), I have decided to designate Iraq as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP.

10. Pursuant to section 503(d)(5) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that a previously granted waiver of the competitive need limitations of section 503(c)(2)(A) is no longer warranted due to changed circumstances.

11. In order to implement the tariff treatment provided under section 7 of the AGOA Acceleration Act, it is necessary to modify the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS).

12. I have determined that each NAFTA Party has eliminated or reduced its normal trade relations (most-favored-nation) rates of duty applicable to the goods enumerated in Table 308.1.1 of NAFTA Annex 308.1 to the levels prescribed in that Table. Annex 308.1 provides for those goods to be originating goods under the NAFTA when imported from Canada or Mexico.

13. Pursuant to section 201(a) of the NAFTA Implementation Act, I have determined that the modifications to the HTS hereinafter proclaimed concerning goods considered to be originating when imported from the territory of a NAFTA Party are necessary and appropriate to carry out or apply Article 308 and Annex 308.1 of the NAFTA.

14. Section 604 of the 1974 Act, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2483), authorizes the President to embody in the HTS the substance of the relevant provisions of that Act, and of other acts affecting import treatment, and actions thereunder, including the removal, modification, continuance, or imposition of any rate of duty or other import restriction.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, acting under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including but not limited to Title V and section 604 of the 1974 Trade Act, section 112 of the AGOA, and section 201(a) of the NAFTA Implementation Act, do proclaim that:

(1) Iraq is designated as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP, effective 15 days after the date of this proclamation.

(2) In order to reflect this designation in the HTS, general note 4(a) to the HTS is modified by adding "Iraq" to the list entitled "Independent Countries", effective with respect to articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after 15 days after the date of this proclamation.

(3) In order to provide that a country no longer be treated as a beneficiary developing country with respect to an eligible article for purposes of the GSP, general note 4(d) to

the HTS is modified as provided in section 1 of Annex I.

(4) In order to withdraw preferential tariff treatment under the GSP for a certain article imported from a certain beneficiary developing country, the Rates of Duty 1-Special subcolumn for such HTS subheading is modified as provided for in section 2 of Annex I to this proclamation.

(5) The waiver of the application of section 503(c)(2)(A) of the 1974 Act to the article in the HTS subheading and to the beneficiary developing country listed in section 3 of Annex I to this proclamation is revoked.

(6) In order to provide for the preferential treatment provided for in section 506A and 506B of the GSP, as amended by section 7(a) of the AGOA Acceleration Act, and section 112 of the AGOA, as amended by sections 7(b) through (f) of the AGOA Acceleration Act, the HTS is modified as provided in Annex II to this proclamation.

(7) In order to implement Article 308 and Annex 308.1 of the NAFTA for certain automatic data processing machinery and parts imported from Canada and Mexico, the HTS is modified as provided in Annex III to this proclamation.

(8) Any provisions of previous proclamations and Executive Orders that are inconsistent with this proclamation are superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

(9) The modifications made by and action taken in Annex I to this proclamation shall be effective with respect to eligible articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after 60 days after the date of this proclamation.

(10) The modifications made by Annex II shall be effective with respect to eligible articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after July 13, 2004, except that the modifications made by section 4(A) relating to increases in the quantity of certain articles eligible for duty-free treatment shall be effective with respect to articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after the dates provided in that section.

(11) The modifications made by Annex III shall be effective with respect to goods entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after January 1, 2003.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 8, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 9.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Notification of Intent To Designate Iraq as a Beneficiary Developing Country for Purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences

September 7, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 502(f) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act"), I am writing to inform you of my intent to designate Iraq as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

I have considered the criteria set forth in sections 501 and 502 of the 1974 Act. In light of these criteria, I have determined that it is appropriate to extend GSP benefits to Iraq.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 7, 2004.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments

September 7, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2005 budget amendments for the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Energy, and the Corps of Engineers. In total, these amendments would not increase the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2005 Budget.

The details of these proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders

September 8, 2004

Intelligence Reform

I want to thank the Members who are here. Thank—thank you all for coming today. We are going to discuss intelligence reform. I will be submitting a plan to the Congress that strengthens intelligence reform—strengthens the intelligence services. We believe that there ought to be a National Intelligence Director who has full budgetary authority. We'll talk to Members of Congress about how to implement that. I look forward to working with the Members to get a bill to my desk as quickly as possible.

It's important we get our intelligence gathering correct. After all, we're still at war. We've got to find the enemy before they hurt us. We've got to do everything we can to protect the homeland. We're still on the offense here in this country. We're chasing down these killers overseas so we don't have to face them here at home. We're making good progress.

Ultimately, we will prevail because liberty changes countries, and liberty changes the habits of people. Liberty promotes peace. And that's why we appreciate the sacrifice of the men and women who wear the uniform. They're serving a great cause. We mourn every loss of life. We'll honor their memories by completing the mission.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Visit to the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida

September 8, 2004

The President. Good afternoon. I want to thank Max Mayfield for this really interesting tour of this important facility. And I want to thank you, Max, for your service to our country.

Director Max Mayfield. My pleasure.

The President. You did a fabulous job. You did a fabulous job. It's good to be here with my brother, Jeb, as well.

A short time ago, I visited the relief efforts at Port St. Lucie, and I've just toured the National Hurricane Center. The people I met today are committed, and they are compassionate. They're doing a fantastic job, and I appreciate their dedicated service to our country.

Once again, Florida has faced the devastation of a hurricane. And once again the people of Florida are showing their character and their strength and their deep concern for their neighbors.

The damage from high winds and flooding reaches the Atlantic Coast to the Panhandle. Some have lost their lives. Many have had their homes damaged. Some have lost their homes. Families have lost power. Small businesses have suffered. Citrus growers have lost much of their crop. And all those here in Florida are in the thoughts and prayers of the American people. People all across this country know that—know what you've been through and care deeply about you.

I want the people of Florida and other affected areas to know that the Federal Government is doing everything we can to help you. This morning, I signed legislation providing $2 billion in additional funding for cleanup and FEMA relief operations and emergency food, shelter, and medical care. I want to thank the Members of Congress for their bipartisan support of this bill. I've also directed the Department of Agriculture to help compensate citrus growers for lost crops and trees, to help fund the clearing of debris, and with other agencies to help migrant farm workers find shelter. As the damage is assessed, I will ask Congress for

additional resources for infrastructure repair and disaster loan assistance to businesses and homeowners.

Jeb is doing a really fine job down here, and I appreciate, Jeb, you and your staff for working so hard on behalf of the people of this State.

I want to thank Mike Brown of FEMA and the FEMA staff that have worked long hours to help coordinate efforts for—for the people of Florida. I want to thank the local officials for their outstanding work as well in preparing and responding to Hurricanes Charley and Frances. And of course, again, I want to thank Max and his staff for doing a really fine job of helping to predict these hurricanes and watching them carefully, and using all the technology available to them to better prepare the people of the United States if a hurricane were to hit.

I want to thank the emergency operation centers all across the State of Florida, the first-responders, the police and firefighters. People are working long hours here to help bring stability and help into the communities in this State, and they're doing a really fine job.

I want to thank the Red Cross—and I appreciate the president, Marty Evans, joining us today. It seems like every time I've been to a disaster, the Red Cross is always there first. And that means a lot to the people of our country.

I want to thank the people from the Convoy of Hope. Jeb and I had a chance today to pass out ice and water and food supplies to people who needed help. We were there because the Convoy of Hope set up an aid station of compassion, and I want to thank those people there. They're from all around the country.

I want to thank the Salvation Army. I want to thank all the faith-based groups and citizens who have showed up to help somebody who needs help.

I want to thank the power and telephone crews who have worked so hard to restore service. A lot of people lost their electricity. And thanks to the good work of people here in Florida and repair folks from around the Southeast, electricity is being restored as quickly as possible.

I know the people of Florida will always remember the nurses and others who have worked incredibly long shifts at shelters to care for the elderly and the vulnerable.

The people of this State are overcoming adversity, once again. The Government is responding with needed resources. Businesses and community and faith-based groups are helping to speed the recovery. And in tragedy, the people of this State and the people across America are responding with goodness and generosity.

May God bless those who hurt. May God bless those who mourn the loss of life. And may God continue to bless this State and our country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Max Mayfield, Director, National Hurricane Center; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Marsha J. Evans, president and chief executive officer, American Red Cross.

Remarks in Colmar, Pennsylvania

September 9, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for the welcome. It's good to be back in Pennsylvania—again. It just seems like I was here yesterday. [*Laughter*] I was—[*laughter*]—kind of. But I'm glad to be here. I really appreciate you all coming out. Spirits are high. I'm feeling great about life.

I really appreciate being here at Byers Choice. Thank you all for your hospitality. You sure know how to make a President feel welcome. We're here because I want to talk about the economy some and a plan to keep this economy moving forward so people can realize their dreams. And it's such a wonderful place to come because the entrepreneurial spirit here is strong.

This is a company that was formed by Bob and Joyce Byers——

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We are here—I appreciate you coming to Byers. It's such an honor

to meet Bob and Joyce Byers. They are—they had a dream, and they wanted to build a small company into a large company, and they've done so. They started their company in the 1960s. They found a good idea—they thought of the idea. Government didn't think of the idea. They did. They decided to take risk. They hired people wisely. They invested wisely, and their company is growing. And I appreciate the contribution they've made.

They've got a fantastic customer base, because they——

[*The disturbance continued.*]

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We are here because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, because there is an optimism in this room that says it can remain stronger. The Byers have got a significant customer base, which means they understand how to run a business, and my mother is one of their customers. [*Laughter*]

And so what we're going to talk about today is our economy and how to keep it growing and how to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong so people can realize their dreams. Today I want to discuss with you the plan I have to keep us on the path to growth and opportunity, a plan that I'm convinced that when Americans listen to, they'll put me and Dick Cheney back in office for 4 more years.

So I told Laura I was coming here, and she said, "Give everybody my best." She's great. She's a fantastic mom and a great wife. She is a wonderful First Lady. So when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you won't have to give a speech." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She gave a great speech the other night. People got to see her heart and her compassion.

I appreciate Congressman Jim Greenwood a lot. I must confess to you that when I heard he was retiring, I got a little mad at him, because I've enjoyed working with him. He is a good, decent, honorable man. And I appreciate you.

I appreciate the fact that Arlen Specter is with us today. I hope you put him back into office for 6 more years. There he is. I enjoy working with Arlen. He's a good, independent thinker, and he's a good—fine United States Senator, and we'll work well together during the next 4 years.

I want to thank Pat Toomey for joining us today as well. He's a class act. I appreciate—I told this to Pat on Air Force One, I said, "I appreciate the way he handled himself after a tough primary." He's coming together. He's working for the ticket, and that shows what kind of guy he is. And I'm honored you're here, Pat.

Where is Mayor Joe? Mr. Mayor. Thank you for coming, Mr. Mayor. I'm proud you're here. [*Applause*] Yes. I always like to stay in touch with the local power. [*Laughter*] Sure enough, there he is. Thanks for coming, Mayor. I appreciate you being here.

Mike Fitzpatrick is with us today. I appreciate you coming, Mike. Appreciate you being here. Tom Corbett is with us today. Appreciate you coming, Tom. Good luck. I want to thank all the candidates who are here and the grassroots activists. I'm traveling your State and traveling the country to ask people not only for the vote but for their help. And I hope you go register voters, find people to show up to the polls. We have a duty in America to vote and—so thanks for the work you're doing. And when you get them to the polls, headed to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in there.

Eunice Sanchez is with us. Where are you, Eunice? There she is. Thanks. And you've got your son and daughter. Thanks for coming. I met Eunice. She works for the Amachi mentoring program in Philadelphia. I don't know if you've heard of Amachi. I have. I have been fortunate enough to be briefed by the people that run that program. Amachi is a mentoring program for children with incarcerated parents. I want you to think about what this good American citizen does. She takes time out of her life to mentor a child to show there's love, the possibility of love. I tell the people of this country that the great strength of our country is the hearts and souls of the American citizens. That's really the true strength of America. And the reason I've

asked—and the reason that Eunice has kindly come today is for me to hold her up as an example for others—for others to recognize that they can help change America, one heart and one soul at a time as well, that our society is a compassionate society because people from all walks of life put their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you, and what can I do to help you?" I appreciate you coming, Eunice. God bless you, and thanks for coming.

I'm looking forward to this—I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm—there's some things I want to do for the next 4 years. [*Laughter*] And I'm looking forward to telling the people of the country where I stand and where I believe and where I'm going to lead the country. I'm running with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with what I call a compassionate conservative philosophy, that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives.

I believe it's the job of a President to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In the last 4 years, we have confronted economic problems. We have got some short-term challenges that came from an economic downturn and a national emergency. We've got some long-term challenges because our economy is changing. In all these areas, we've acted, and we're moving forward. Today I want to talk to you about some of the plans we have.

Remember the history. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind the people what we have been through. When Dick Cheney and I took office in January—on January 20th of 2001, our economy was heading into a recession, and the stock market had been declining for 5 months prior to our arrival. Our Nation faced some corporate scandals that cost people jobs and savings and shook our confidence. Today, it is absolutely clear that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

America was attacked. Our economy lost nearly a million jobs after that attack in just 3 months. We acted with a clear strategy. We unleashed the energy and innovative spirit of America with the largest tax relief in a generation. The tax relief provided small-business owners the resources and incentives they need to expand and grow and hire more workers. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. The small-business sector of our economy is strong, and the tax relief helped strengthen it.

We encouraged savings and investment by cutting taxes on dividends and capital gains. Tax relief put money in the hands of American workers so they could save for their retirement or for their home or for the education of their children. My philosophy is, Government sets priorities, funds its priorities, and lets the people keep as much money as possible. I think you can spend your money better than the Federal Government can.

We increased the child credit and reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage. And the results are clear. Our country has now seen 12 straight months of job gains. Over the past year, we've added 1.7 million jobs. That is more than Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Canada, and France combined. Unemployment is down to 5.4 percent. That is nearly a full point below the rate in the summer of 2003, and it is below the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

Interest rates and mortgage rates are near historic lows. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in the last 20 years. The manufacturing sector is improving. When I took office, manufacturing employment had been declining for almost 3 years. In the last 6 months of the prior administration, more than 200,000 manufacturing jobs were lost. We're turning that around. Since January, America has added 107,000 manufacturing jobs, including 22,000 last month alone. We are making steady progress for American workers.

Because of the tax relief, the middle class is paying less in Federal taxes. The average family of four with an income of $40,000 got nearly a $2,000 tax cut. Real after-tax incomes are up almost 10 percent since December of 2000. People have got more money in their pockets because of the tax relief. Our economy is stronger because people are keeping more of what they earn.

Listen, we also face long-term challenges in this economy. The workers of our parents' generation typically had one job, one skill, one career, often with one company that provided health care and a pension. That's the way it used to be. This world of ours is changing. By the way, most of those workers were men. Today, workers change jobs, even careers, many times during their lives. And in one of the most dramatic shifts our society has seen, two-thirds of all moms also work outside the home. This world of ours has changed. And yet, the institutions of Government haven't changed.

Let me tell you what else has changed. Productivity has grown faster over the last 3 years than any time in more than 40 years, in part because technology is changing the way we do things. You'd rather use a computer than a typewriter. You'd rather use a backhoe than a shovel. [*Laughter*] That's productivity. But it also means that the same work can be done by fewer workers. And that creates a problem for someone looking for a job. That's why manufacturing still produces roughly the same share of our GDP but with a smaller share of the workforce. So these are some long-term challenges we face.

But it's a time of great opportunity. A time of change creates great opportunity, so long as the Government takes the side of the workers and the families here in America, so long as Government recognizes this: Our fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday—think about that—not for tomorrow. I believe in the next 4 years, we've got to transform these systems to help our citizens, to help prepare our citizens, to help free citizens so they can realize the great dream of our country.

And so you'll hear me talk a lot about changing systems to help people, not increasing Government to stifle dreams. Obviously, in order for people to realize their dreams, there has to be robust economic growth. In order to make sure that the productivity increases don't cause people not to be able to find a job, we got to grow this economy. And that's what I want to talk to you about right quick, a plan to make sure we continue to create jobs here in America.

First of all, in order to have jobs here, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want people working here, it's got to be the best place to risk capital, the best place to expand, the best place to realize dreams. One way to make sure it's the best place to do business is to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses. You fill out a lot of paperwork if you're a small-business owner in America. I can't promise you anybody in Government ever reads it. [*Laughter*]

We want jobs here in the Philadelphia area. We want to make sure the manufacturing sector is robust. Congress needs to get an energy plan to my desk now. I submitted a plan 2 years ago. It's a plan that encourages conservation, expands renewables, uses clean coal technologies. Listen, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy if we want jobs to remain in America.

In order to keep jobs here so people can realize their dreams, we must open up markets for U.S. products. Listen, we've opened up our markets, and it's good for consumers we've opened up our markets. If you have more choices in the marketplace, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and better quality. And so what I'm saying to countries like China is, "Treat us the way we treat you." I believe American farmers and manufacturers and businessowners can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, so long as the rules are fair. What we will do is reject economic isolationism. Economic isolationism will hurt America's workers.

In order to make sure we create jobs here, we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that threaten employers. I believe strongly in legal reform, because I understand personal injury lawyers should not get richer at the expense of hard-working Americans and American entrepreneurs.

Finally, in order to keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes on the entrepreneurs in America is bad economic policy.

I told you there's some systems that need to change. One system that needs to change

is the Federal Tax Code. It is too cumbersome. I tried to hold it the other day—[*laughter*]—when I was campaigning in Missouri. I'm in pretty good shape. It was hard to hold it. [*Laughter*] It's got a million words in it. It takes the American people 6 billion hours a year, every year, to file these forms. It is full of special interest loopholes. For the sake of economic growth and for the sake of fairness, we need to change the Tax Code. We need to make it simple and easy to understand.

A changing world means that the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century are changing, and it's something we've got to recognize. And a changing economy is one that creates new opportunities. But sometimes there's a skills gap. And that's why I believe we ought to expand access to our community college systems, to make sure that the workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

As well most new jobs in a changing—this changing world require 2 years of college. Yet only one in four of our students gets there. And so we need early intervention programs in our high schools to solve problems early, before they're too late. We need to have new focus on math and science. As the No Child Left Behind Act begins to fill the education pipeline with good readers, we will require a rigorous exam before graduation from high school. See, what I'm telling you is, by raising performance in high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

These are changing times, and our economy is changing. And there are communities around where manufacturing, textiles, and other jobs no longer exist. There are poor communities in our country that need help as well. And that's why, the other night at the convention, I announced American opportunity zones. These zones will provide tax relief and other incentives for new businesses to be created and to improve housing and job training and bringing hope. In other words, in changing times, there are ways to help communities that have suffered during changing times, with good tax policy, good regulation policy, and good housing policy.

Listen, in order to make sure jobs stay here, we've got to do something about health care. We need to make sure health care is available and affordable. Do you realize more than half the uninsured are employees of small businesses? Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. One way to help small businesses afford health care is to allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We will offer tax credits to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts. We'll provide direct help for low-income Americans to purchase health savings accounts. These accounts give workers the security of insurance against major illness, the opportunity to save tax-free for routine health expenses, and the freedom of knowing you can take your account with you whenever you change jobs or careers.

I'm a big believer in community and rural health centers. These are facilities where low-income Americans can get primary care. I believe every poor county in America ought to have one of these facilities in order to take the pressure off emergency rooms around the United States.

In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up your health care costs. I appreciate working with Jim Greenwood on this issue. He figured it out, and I hope the people of this country figure it out. These frivolous lawsuits are making it awfully hard for a lot of docs to practice medicine. You're losing good docs. Greenwood was telling me about the doctor that saved his dad's life, had to leave practice because his premiums were too high. Many doctors, in order to avoid litigation, practice defensive medicine. In other words, they run up the costs of health care so if they ever get caught—pulled in front of a court of law, they've got a defense. It's costing the taxpayers about $28 billion a year; the defensive practice of medicine costs 28 billion a year. We have a national problem, and it requires a national solution. I've submitted legislation that Greenwood got passed in the House. It's stuck in the Senate because

the trial lawyers are powerful in the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

I'm looking forward to the debate on health care. I'm looking forward to it. In all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Our labor laws need to change. We've got a lot of moms who are now in the workplace. And yet, it's really hard for moms to find enough time to do their duty as moms, see, because the rules—the labor laws are stuck in the past. I think we need to have flextime and comp-time to allow families to be able to have more quality time.

In a changing world, ownership can bring stability to your life. One of the most hopeful statistics of the last year or two has been that the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. There's more minority families who are opening up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Come in to my house." It's a really important part of a future, when more and more people can own their home. We've got a plan to encourage homeownership in this country.

And we've got to make sure that our pension systems work, the Social Security system works. If you're an older American, nothing will change. The Social Security trust will fulfill its promise to you. If you're a baby boomer, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to receiving the promise of Social Security. But we need to worry about our children and grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their taxes and set up a personal savings account, to make sure the Social Security promise that's made to them—an account that they can call their own, an account that Government cannot take away, and an account that they can pass on from one generation to the next.

In these proposals, we seek not to provide a Government program but a greater path to opportunity and more freedom for you to decide what's best for your life and, therefore, I believe, more opportunity for every citizen. And we got a choice in this race. I mean, it's a clear choice. See, I believe our opponent's philosophy is very different from ours. If you carefully listen, he wants to expand Government. Listen to the proposals. That's what he wants to do. What we want to do is expand opportunity. He wants to give more power to Washington by raising taxes and spending more money, and he's got a record to match his promises. [*Laughter*]

Over two decades in Washington, he has voted for higher income taxes, higher taxes on Social Security benefits. That's part of his record. He repeatedly voted for higher taxes on small businesses, higher taxes on gasoline. He voted against tax relief for married couples, for increasing the child credit, and against expanding tax-free retirement savings. We have a difference of opinion when it comes to taxation. If you drive a car, Senator Kerry has voted for higher taxes on you. If you have a job, he's voted for higher taxes on you. If you're married or have children, he's voted for higher taxes on you. The good news is, on the 2d of November, you have a chance to vote.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. There is a reason for supporting higher taxes, because he wants to dramatically increase Government spending. It's part of his platform. On the campaign trail, he's proposed more than $2 trillion in new Federal spending so far. [*Laughter*] And we still have 54 more days to go. Now, he says he's going to pay for all that by raising taxes on the wealthiest 2 percent of the population. There's just one problem with that. My opponent's tax increases would bring only about $650 billion in revenue over the next 10 years, see? And he wants to spend over 2 trillion. So you do the math. [*Laughter*] The plan leaves him more than $1.4 trillion short. And guess who would wind up paying the bill?

Now, one of his key economic advisers—one of my opponent's key economic advisers is saying they won't give the details on how they would raise spending and lower the deficit until after the election. [*Laughter*] Well,

if they want to hold back information until the people vote, you can bet it won't be good news for the taxpayers. But America will reject the hidden Kerry tax plan.

Raising taxes will be bad for our economy. Raising taxes will be bad for the small-business sector of America. And I'll tell you why. Ninety percent of small-business owners pay tax at the individual income-tax level. Ninety percent of small-business owners are Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorship. Byers Choice is a Subchapter S corporation. Now, if you're organized as a Subchapter S or sole proprietorship, when you pay your tax, you fill out the individual income-tax forms. And so when you talk about raising the top two brackets in the individual taxes, you're talking about taxing companies like Byers Choice. I don't see—and by the way, 70 percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Why does it make sense to tax the job creators? It doesn't make sense to tax the job creators.

Bob said this, he said, "That would hurt my company." When he heard the plan to raise taxes to pay for promises, political promises, he said, "That would hurt my company. It would cut off jobs I plan to create." My opponent, by making political promises and by promising to tax small businesses such as Byers Choice, would hurt our economy. I believe in order to continue economic growth, we need an energy plan, good trade policy, good regulatory policy, good legal policy, good health policy, and we need to make the tax relief permanent.

In order to make sure we have sustained economic growth, we will also continue to protect the homeland over the next 4 years. There's a lot of good people working hard on your behalf. And we reorganized the Department—departments to create the Department of Homeland Security so we can better talk to each other, better respond to crisis, better deal with emergency, better share intelligence. And we're getting better in Washington, DC, about doing what is necessary to protect you. And there's a lot of good people working hard to do so, and I appreciate it. As the 9/11 Commission said, "America is safer but not yet safe." I agree. And so you just got to know there's some fine people at all levels of government working hard.

But the best way to protect the homeland is to stay on the offensive, is to find the terrorists. You cannot talk sense to these people. You've seen how they behave. You saw the attacks of September the 11th. You saw what happened to those Russian schoolchildren. America must continue to lead the world. We will find them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're making progress. We're making progress. Three-quarters of Al Qaida's known leadership has been brought to justice. Because we upheld doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorists," the Taliban are no longer in power in Afghanistan. Think about the progress in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls weren't allow to go to school and their moms would be pulled in a public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of these barbaric people. And today, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Over 10 million citizens have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Amazing, isn't it? Freedom is on the march in Afghanistan, and that's good for America.

In Iraq, we removed a sworn enemy of America who had ties to terror and used weapons of mass destruction. Listen, I recognize we didn't find the stockpiles we all thought were there—all of us thought were there. But remember Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons. He could have passed that capability on to the enemy. And that's not a risk we could afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam in a prison cell.

We're making progress there. I'm impressed by Prime Minister Allawi. He's a strong guy who believes that democracy is the future of Iraq, and he's got hard work to do. It wasn't all that long ago that people were brutalized by Saddam Hussein. But we're making progress. There will be elections in January of next year. It's amazing, when you think about it. They've gone from tyranny to elections in a brief period of time.

Our goal in Iraq is to—like it is in Afghanistan—is to help provide enough stability so the political process can move forward, is to train Iraqis and Afghan citizens so they can do the hard work of defending their country against the few who want to thwart the desires of the many, is to put those countries on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then bring our troops home.

I'm oftentimes asked what I tell those who—the loved ones of those who lost their life in combat. I tell them this, I say, "Your son or daughter or wife or husband is serving during historic times." These are times that will help make this world a more peaceful place. It's a time for little children to be able to—when we get it right—for children to grow up in a peaceful world. I tell them that in order to honor their memory, we will complete the mission.

I say this: I believe in the power of liberty to transform lives. That's what I believe. The core of my belief is that liberty has got the incredible capacity to convert enemies to friends, tyrannical societies to free societies. And that makes the world more peaceful, a peace we all want.

You know, I tell people about my meetings with Prime Minister Koizumi, the Prime Minister of Japan, who is the Prime Minister of a country that my dad fought against, your dads and grandfathers fought against. They were the sworn enemy of America some 60 years ago. And today, I sit down at the table with him to discuss peace. He's an ally in peace. And I'm able to do so because my predecessor Harry Truman and other American citizens believed that the enemy could become a friend if democracy took hold in Japan.

Now, there was a lot of skeptics and doubters during those days, and you can understand why. We'd just been fighting these people. But because they believed in the power of liberty to transform lives, they helped Japan develop a self-governing democracy. And today, Japan is an ally when it comes to keeping the peace. The Prime Minister and I talk about North Korea. We talk about Iraq. We talk about humanitarian needs around the world. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, and they're going to be talking about the peace, and they're going to look back in history and say, "Thank goodness America never forgot the power of liberty to change lives."

I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come by today. As you can see, I've got a plan to continue growing this economy so people can realize their hopes and dreams; that I know what needs to be done when it comes to securing this homeland and winning the war on terror; that I believe strongly in the values that make us a great nation; and that, with your help, we're going to win Pennsylvania and win a great election in November.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. at Byers Choice. In his remarks, he referred to Mike Fitzpatrick, candidate for Congress in Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District; Tom Corbett, candidate for Pennsylvania Attorney General; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks in Johnstown, Pennsylvania

September 9, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. You know, it turns out I am the first sitting President to have visited Johnstown in more than 30 years. All those other Presidents sure missed out. Thanks for coming. I'm proud you came out. I'm honored you are here. I'm pleased to be with the good folks here in Johnstown. I know you like to hunt and fish. So do I. I know you care about your neighbors. I appreciate that. I know you take your baseball seriously. And from the looks of things, with your help, we'll carry Pennsylvania in November.

I'm here to ask for your vote. And I'm here to ask for your help. We have a duty to vote in this country, and I'm here to ask you to register your friends and neighbors and encourage them to do their duty. And when you're out registering people, don't overlook

discerning Democrats. You might remember my friend Zell Miller. He represents a lot of folks who understand that when you put Dick Cheney and me back in office, this country will be safer, stronger, and better for every American.

My regret is that Laura didn't come with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. She was a public school librarian when I asked her to marry me. And she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, so long as I don't have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. You saw her the other night in New York City. You saw how gracious she is, how strong she is. I love her dearly. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment and great experience and can get the job done for the American people.

I appreciate Congressman Bill Shuster joining us today. He's been telling me all along I need to come to Johnstown, Pennsylvania. When I showed up, he said, "You finally made it." I said, "I made it just in time to rally these folks to get ready to win this election come November."

I want to thank your mayor, Don Zucco, for joining us today. Mr. Mayor, I'm proud you're here. Sometimes they say, "Well, do you ever have any advice for the local officials?" Mr. Mayor, fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you coming, Mayor.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I want to thank my friend Victor Raia. He heads Veterans for Bush. And I want to thank all the veterans who have joined us here today as well.

I want to thank the Wil Gravatt Band. I appreciate them playing here. I appreciate the high school band that's here tonight. Thank you for coming. I'm going to try to keep my speech short so you can get home and do your homework. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here, the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls. I really appreciate your help. I know you're working hard, but keep working. And I'll be working right alongside of you.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm going to tell the people where I stand, where I—what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation. I'm going to tell them that I have a plan to keep this country of ours safer and a more hopeful America. I'm running on a compassionate conservative philosophy that says, "Government ought to help people, not dictate to people."

I believe every child can learn. That's what I believe. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised standards. We're measuring early to solve problems before it is too late. We're ending that old practice of just shuffling the kids through the system year after year without learning the basics. We trust the local people to make the right decisions for the schools. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. I went up to Washington to fix problems. We had a problem with Medicare. Let me give you one example. Medicare would pay tens of thousands of dollars for the heart surgery, and that's okay. But it wouldn't pay for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place. It didn't make any sense for our seniors to have a Medicare system like that, and it certainly didn't make sense for the taxpayers. We have modernized Medicare. Our seniors will get prescription drug coverage, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of the American worker and farmer and small-business owner. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind your friends and neighbors that we've been through a lot. This economy of ours has been through a lot. See, 5 months before I got into office, the stock market had begun to decline. We had a recession. We had corporate scandals, which affected our economy. And of course, we had

the attacks on our country. But we've overcome all these obstacles because we've got good workers, good small-business owners. We've overcome them too because of well-timed tax cuts.

And this economy of ours is strong, and it is getting stronger. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We're adding jobs here in America, about 1.7 million new jobs over the last 12 months. We've added 107,000 manufacturing jobs since January. The unemployment rate is now 5.4 percent. That is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your great State is 5.3 percent. The economic stimulus plan we passed is working.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win a great victory in November.

The world in which we live and work is changing. In the generations of our dads and granddads, a man generally had one job and one career, worked for one company, and the company provided health care and a pension plan. It's a different world today. I understand it's a different world today. Many women now work inside the home and outside the home. The workplace is changing. Many people change careers. Yet many of the most fundamental systems of our Government, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. In the next 4 years, we will transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices, so you can realize the great promise of America.

Listen, any hopeful society has a growing economy, and I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we must reduce the regulatory burden on our small-business owners in America. To create more jobs in America, we must stop the junk lawsuits that threaten our employers. To keep jobs here and to expand our economy, Congress needs to pass my energy plan, a plan that encourage conservation, encourages renewable sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages clean coal technology. It is a plan that understands that we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Listen, to create jobs here, we've got to open up markets for U.S. products. We open up our markets for goods from other countries, and that's good for the consumer. And it's good for you. If you've got more choices to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. So what I tell countries like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

To create jobs, we got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. We have a difference of opinion about taxes in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has proposed more than $2 trillion in new spending so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Awfully tempting when you're coming down the pike to tell everybody what they want to hear. So they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, that's simple. We'll just tax the rich." There's two problems with that. One is that you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2 trillion. There's a gap between what he promises and what he says he's going to do. Guess who usually has to fill that gap? Yes. Here's the other problem. You've heard that rhetoric before, "Oh, don't worry. We'll just tax the rich." They hire lawyers and accountants and dodge, and you get stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

Thinking about taxes, the Federal Tax Code needs to be changed. It's a complicated mess. It is full of special interest loopholes. Americans spend hours after hours filling out their tax form. They estimate about 6 billion hours worth of paperwork and headache on

an annual basis is spent by American workers and small-business owners and big businesses. You see, the American people need a simpler, fairer, progrowth Tax Code. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to simplify and make more fair the Federal Tax Code.

The job base is changing, and we've got to help workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a strong proponent of helping workers gain new skills at the community colleges across this country. Most new jobs are now filled by people with at least 2 years of college. Yet one in four of our students gets there. So in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place an emphasis on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In this time of change, we will do more to make sure health care is available and affordable. More than half of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble with health care costs. In order to help those families and help small businesses, Government should allow small businesses to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

We will expand health savings accounts. We will make sure poor communities have got community health centers. And we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits. I'm telling you, the cost of medicine is on the rise because junk lawsuits are driving good docs out of practice and running up the cost of medicine here in America. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. And my opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In a changing society, ownership can help bring stability to people's lives. That's why we want more people owning their own home in America. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high right now. Isn't that fantastic? Think about that. More people are opening their front door, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." We've got a plan to continue to expand homeownership to every community in this country.

And we also want to make sure that our pension plans are modern and work. If you're an older citizen, you're in good shape when it comes to Social Security. If you're a baby boomer, like me, you're in okay shape when it comes to Social Security. But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set it aside in a personal account to make sure Social Security is available.

We have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. If you listen carefully to the rhetoric, my opponent's programs expand Government. My programs expand opportunity. And I feel comfortable doing that because I think the role of Government is to trust the people, trust the people with their own decisions, trust the people with their own money, trust the people to make the right judgment.

In a world of change, there's some things that just do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a time of change, we must support the institutions that give us stability, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of live in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride,

not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. And we're reforming and strengthening the intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we will prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy and clear moral purpose and some tough decisions, and the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, this Nation must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. I said, "Take a look at this threat," and they took a look at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. They concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, came to the same conclusion we came to, and he authorized the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into combat, we must try all means to deal with any threat. See, I was hopeful diplomacy would work. And so I went to the United Nations, and I gave a speech at the U.N. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history we remembered. And with a 15-to-nothing vote, the United Nations Security Council voted that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein wasn't interested in what the free world has to say. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the inspectors that were sent into his country. So I had a choice to make, a choice that only comes to the Oval Office, a choice nobody wants to make but must be prepared to make: Do I trust the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or do I take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Because we acted, because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people now live in freedom. Fifty million people are free. In Afghanistan, the world has changed since those dark days when young girls weren't allowed to go to school and their mothers were whipped in the public square. The Taliban were barbaric people. They were backward. They had a dim vision of the world. Today, Afghanistan is an ally. They're helping us in the war on terror, and over 10 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. It's amazing.

Despite ongoing violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January. We are standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. We're also standing with them because we're serving a vital and historic cause that will make our country safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies, which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free Governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists, instead of harboring them. And that makes America more secure, and it makes the world more peaceful.

Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies and their police forces so citizens in those countries can do the hard work of defending the hopes of many against the terror of a few. We'll help them get on their way to elections. We'll help them become more stable, and then our troops will return home with the honor they've earned.

I'm proud of our military. I'm proud of our military, and I know you are as well. We've got a fantastic United States military. I've had the privilege of meeting with the service men and women who wear our uniform. I've seen their unselfish courage. I know their great decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

I have made a pledge to those who wear the uniform and their families that they will have all the support they need to complete their missions. That's why, a year ago, I went to the United States Congress and proposed supplemental funding of $87 billion to help our troops in not only Iraq, but Afghanistan. It was important funding, really important funding. It was a really important funding request because it funded body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, supplies needed for people to do their jobs. And we received great bipartisan support, so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding request.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators—two of those four were my opponent and his runningmate. When asked to explain his vote, he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, I suspect that not many people in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, talks that way. They kept asking him. He said, well, he was proud of the vote. And finally, my opponent said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

After voting for the war but against funding it, after saying he would have voted for the war even knowing everything we know today, my opponent woke up this week—[*laughter*]—with new campaign advisers and yet another new position. Suddenly, he's against it again.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No matter how many times he flip-flops, we were right to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies are making. I spoke with Tony Blair this morning. He's got a clear vision. He's a good, strong leader. Every time I talk to him, I thank him for his contributions. You know, we put together a broad coalition—some 40 nations in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. And I will continue, over the next 4 years, to build our alliances, to strengthen our relationships. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I like to tell the people that I've spent time with the Prime Minister of Japan during my 3½ years as President. I like him a lot. He's a good fellow. The amazing thing about my discussions with him is that here I am, sitting down with somebody that our country was at war with some 60 years ago—my dad, I'm sure your dads or granddads fought against the Japanese. They were our sworn enemy. Yet right after World War II, President Harry Truman and many Americans believed that by helping the Japanese self-govern and become a democracy, that liberty would transform an enemy into a friend. And sure enough, it worked, because, guess what, Prime Minister Koizumi and I sit around the table talking about how to make the world more peaceful, talking about how to use our respective positions in the world to make our countries more secure and the world a better place. Someday, an American President and a duly elected leader from Iraq will be sitting down at the table talking about the peace.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe

that if given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; it is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and freedom abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of the land. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation, and we will continue to work for freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console the first-responders, the brave firefighters and policemen who had gone into rubble and come out emptyhanded—a lot of them had come out emptyhanded. They'd lost their buddies. A guy looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Don't let me down." I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help and with your hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:06 p.m. at the Cambria County War Memorial Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Mayor Donato B. Zucco of Johnston, PA; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Statement on the Situation in Sudan

September 9, 2004

The United States is appalled by the violence in Darfur, Sudan. Our Government has led the international effort to end the suffering there by speaking clearly about the crisis and sending assistance to the suffering. We have provided more than $211 million in aid and humanitarian relief, and we will provide an additional $250 million. To end the conflict, we helped broker a cease-fire and worked closely with the African Union to deploy monitors and soldiers to investigate violations.

I sent Secretary of State Powell to Darfur and Khartoum to demand that the Sudanese Government act to end the violence. We sponsored a strong Security Council resolution, which passed on July 30. This resolution called on the Government to disarm the Janjaweed militias which have terrorized the people of Darfur and bring their leaders to justice. Secretary Powell later sent a team of investigators into the refugee camps to interview the victims of atrocities. As a result of these investigations and other information, we have concluded that genocide has taken place in Darfur. We urge the international community to work with us to prevent and suppress acts of genocide. We call on the United Nations to undertake a full investigation of the genocide and other crimes in Darfur.

The Government of Sudan has not complied with U.N. Security Council resolutions and has not respected the cease-fire which it signed. The rebels are also guilty of cease-fire violations and failing to carry out past commitments. It is clear that only outside action can stop the killing. My Government is seeking a new Security Council resolution to authorize an expanded African Union security force to prevent further bloodshed. We will also seek to ban flights by Sudanese military aircraft in Darfur.

The world cannot ignore the suffering of more than 1 million people. The U.S. will continue to help relieve suffering, as we demand that the Janjaweed disarm, and that the Government, Janjaweed, and Darfur rebels end the violence.

Remarks in Huntington, West Virginia

September 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much for coming. By the sound of things, it sounds like the Herd is thundering. It's good to be back here in Huntington. Thank you all for the hospitality. You know, this isn't my first time here. I've liked it every time I've come because the people are down-to-Earth, hard-working, decent, and they love America just like I do.

I want to thank our friends from Ohio who have joined us today. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank our friends from Kentucky who are here today. And of course, I want to thank my friends from West Virginia who are here. Thank you all for coming.

I told Zell we're going to have a heck of a day. He's helping to kick it off in fine fashion. You know, Zell Miller, he represents a lot of folks out there who are wondering whether or not it's okay to vote Republican. He's what I would call a discerning Democrat. More importantly, he is a proud American, and I'm proud to call Zell Miller friend.

I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm here to let you know that I'm willing to get amongst the people and say, "I need your vote, and I need your help to win this election." You see, we have a duty in this country to vote, and I would hope you would go out and register your friends and neighbors. Remind them we have a duty. Register our fellow Republicans; register independents; register discerning Democrats. Then after you register them, get them headed to the polls. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, put Dick Cheney and me back in there for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Zell said—we got on the bus after flying up from Washington, and he said, "I wish you'd have brought Laura." He's got really good judgment. [*Laughter*] You know, when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, I'll be—I'm willing to marry you, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] She was a public school librarian who didn't particularly care about politics or politicians. I said, "That's fine, you'll never have to give a speech." And we got married. Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. [*Laughter*] She is a—the country saw, in New York City, she not only gives a good speech, but she's gracious and strong. She's comforting. I love her dearly. Perhaps the most important reason of all in putting me back in office is so that Laura will have 4 more years as your First Lady.

I appreciate Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito from the great State of West Virginia joining us today. Shelley Moore is a fine, fine Member of the United States Congress. She's a class act. I also appreciate today traveling with Senator Mike DeWine from the State of Ohio. I appreciate you coming, Mike. He too is a fine United States Senator, and I'm proud his son Patrick is joining us today as well.

I want to thank all the State and local officials here. I want to thank all the candidates for throwing your hat in the ring. I appreciate the Wil Gravatt Band. I want to thank the Parkersburg Base Army Reserve Charlie Company, the 463d Engineering Battalion. Thank you all for coming.

Most of all, thank you all for taking Friday out of your life to come. I appreciate you being here—for taking this Friday to come here. I appreciate it. It means a lot to me. I know it means a lot to Zell. See, I'm looking forward to this campaign. I'm going to tell the people where I stand and what I believe and where I'll lead this country.

I believe every child can learn and expect every school to teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I believe we ought to raise standards. I believe we ought to measure early to solve problems before it's too late. I believe we got to stop this practice of just shuffling kids through our schools year after year, grade

after grade without learning the basics. I believe we've got to trust the local people to make the right decisions for their schools. I know we're closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. Medicare is an incredibly important program for our seniors, but it wasn't modernizing. People say, "What do you mean when you say that?" Well, Medicare would pay thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars for heart surgery, but it would not pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed. That didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. I went to Washington, DC, to solve problems. We have now modernized Medicare to help our seniors. Beginning in 2006, seniors will get prescription drug coverage, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers, and ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people about what this economy has been through. Five months before we got into office, the stock market had started to decline. We had a recession right as we got there. There was corporate scandals. By the way, we made it clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We had a terrorist attack on our country. All those were obstacles for our American workers.

See, we're overcoming these obstacles. We're overcoming these obstacles because we got great workers, great farmers. We're overcoming it because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We're overcoming it because of well-time tax relief.

Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added about 1.7 million new jobs in the past year. We've added 107,000 manufacturing jobs since January. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in West Virginia is 5.2 percent. The economic stimulus plan we passed is working.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch. I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we will carry West Virginia again; we'll carry Ohio again; we'll carry Kentucky again; and we'll win in November.

Listen, I understand the world we're living in is changing. The generation of our dads and granddads, a person generally had one job, one career, worked for one company that provided health care and a pension. Today, it's different. The workforce has changed. Most of those workers in the past were men. Today, many, many workers are women. They're working inside the home and outside the home. Many people change jobs and careers several times over the course of a lifetime. Yet many of the fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. And so, for the next 4 years, we'll transform the systems to help our citizens. We'll transform these systems so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can realize the great promise of America.

Any hopeful society has a growing economy, and I have a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to reduce the regulations on our businesses, particularly small businesses. It means we got to stop these junk lawsuits that are threatening employers all across the country.

It means Congress needs to get my energy policy to my desk. Yes, in order to create jobs here in America, we need sound energy policy. That means more conservation; that

means supporting renewables; and that means using coal, clean coal technology to make sure people can find work. The plan I submitted will modernize the electricity grid so hospitals and offices can keep focus on hiring workers, not coping with blackouts. What I'm telling you is, we need an energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Listen, to create jobs, we've got to reject economic isolationism and open up markets for U.S. products. See, we open up our markets for foreign goods, and that's good for you. It's good for you because the more products you can choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at higher quality and better price. That's how the market works. So what I'm telling places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." See, the best policy is to level the playing field, because Americans can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

To make sure jobs are here in America, to make sure people can find work, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. See, I'm running against a fellow, he's already promised over $2 trillion of new money, new Federal programs, so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We've got—there's going to be a lot of temptations coming down the pike to tell everybody everywhere what they want to hear. That means—that generally means spending your money. But the problem is, he hasn't told us how he's going to spend—pay for it. See, he said, "Oh, don't worry. We'll pay for it by taxing the rich." Two things wrong with that. One is, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2 trillion worth of new programs. See, there's a gap between his promise and what he can deliver, and guess who's going to get stuck with the bill? Secondly, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you? "Oh, don't worry. We'll just tax the rich." Well, the rich hire accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win a great victory in November.

And speaking about the Tax Code, we're going to do something about our Tax Code in a second term. We're going to make it easier to understand, and we're going to simplify it. This Tax Code of ours is too complicated. It is filled with special interest loopholes. Americans spend about 6 billion hours a year on taxes because of the complicated nature of the Tax Code. The Tax Code is a drag on our economy. In a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Federal Tax Code.

Listen, this world of ours is changing, and the nature of the jobs are changing. And we've got to help workers gain the skills necessary so they can fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a big believer in improving access to the community colleges all across our country. I remember coming to the community college here in Huntington, West Virginia. We talked about job training. We talked about people having the skills necessary to fill the jobs which are being created.

And we got to do a better job in our high schools. Do you realize that about—most of the new jobs, over 50 percent of the new jobs require at least 2 years of college? And yet, one in four of our students gets there. That's why we've got to fund early intervention programs in high schools to help students who are at risk. We want to place a new focus on math and science in our high schools. We want to require a rigorous exam—over time, require a rigorous exam before graduation. See, by raising performance in high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

We'll do more to make quality health care available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. One way to help small businesses afford health care and, therefore, help families is to allow them to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts big companies get. We'll help more people own and manage their own health care plans. We'll expand health savings accounts. We'll ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural

health center so people can get the primary care they need. And we're going to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running good docs out of practice and running up your costs.

One reason small businesses are having trouble affording health care is because these lawsuits are running up the cost of medicine. Make no mistake about it, junk lawsuits are running up your costs. And make no mistake about it, too many good docs are being run out of practice. And that's harmful. It's harmful for the folks in Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, and all across America. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In a changing world, ownership brings stability to people's lives. One of the most hopeful statistics in recent times is the fact that homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America. More and more people are owning their home. In a new term, we'll continue to expand ownership all across this country. We want more and more people opening the door of the place where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

And we want to make sure our younger workers have got a Social Security system that's viable. Now, let me say, if you're an older worker or you're a dependent now on Social Security, you're going to be just fine. If you're a baby boomer, you'll be just fine when it comes to Social Security as it's now structured. But I think we need to think about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. It's one thing for people like Zell and me to say it's going to be fine for us; we have an obligation to see that it's fine for younger folks. And so, therefore, I think younger workers who are coming up ought to have the right to take some of their own tax money and put it in an account they can call their own, a personal savings account that will help them with Social Security.

In a world of change, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a time of change, we'll support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We believe—we stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for the Second Amendment, which gives every American the individual right to bear arms. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work—we will continue our work to advance freedom in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago—4 short years ago—Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was seriously pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

The progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. The toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew he had a long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. Members of both Houses and both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. They came to the same conclusion that my administration came to—Saddam Hussein was a threat—and they authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, and he came to the same conclusion then that we had come to, that Saddam Hussein was a threat. He authorized—he voted to authorize the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all options in order to solve the threat. And that's why I went to the United Nations. I was hoping that diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence we looked at. They remembered the same history we remembered, and they came to the conclusion that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. So the world spoke with a 15-to-nothing vote in the Security Council.

But Saddam Hussein wasn't interested in what the world had to say. He hadn't been interested over the past decade, and he certainly wasn't interested now. He ignored the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when the U.N. decided to send inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived them. In other words, he wasn't about to comply.

So I had a choice to make at this point in time: Do I take the word of a madman, forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Because we acted to defend ourselves, 50 million people now live in freedom. Because we upheld doctrine, because the most solemn duty of government is to defend the security of the people of this country, 50 million people now in Afghanistan and Iraq are free. Think about Afghanistan for a minute. This is a country, not all that long ago, where young girls weren't allowed to go to school, and their mothers were taken into the public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of the Taliban. The Taliban was backward and barbaric in their vision. They're the opposite of what we stand for in America. They didn't believe in religious freedom. They didn't believe in political freedom. They didn't believe in freedom. Today, over 10 million Afghan men and women—10 million citizens, over 40 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote for the upcoming Presidential election. It's amazing.

Freedom is powerful, isn't it? In Iraq, it's still tough there. But Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections will be held in January.

The world is changing. Our Nation is standing with the people of those countries, because when America gives its word, it must keep its word. We're standing with those people in the country—in those countries, and as we do so, we're serving a historic cause that will make our country safer and make the world more peaceful, something we all want. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. A free Iraq and a free Afghanistan will serve as a powerful example for those who long for freedom in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom.

So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help the new leaders. We'll help them head down the road to democracy. We'll help them hold elections. More importantly, we'll train Afghan and Iraqi citizens for police and their armies so they can do the hard work of defending their countries, their fellow countrymen from the designs and demands of a few terrorists. We'll help them provide—we'll provide those countries with stability as quickly as we can get the

job done. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I'm proud of our military. We've got a great United States military. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who wear the Nation's uniform. I've met them all across bases here in America and around the world. I'm telling you, I've seen their unselfish courage, their great decency. I appreciate the veterans who are here today who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform today. I appreciate the military families who are here today.

I made a commitment to those who wear the uniform and their families that they will have the resources they need to complete their missions. So I went to the Congress a year ago and proposed supplemental funding of $87 billion. It's really important funding because it provided body armor, spare parts, ammunition, fuel, supplies needed by our troops who were in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan. I appreciate Senator Miller's strong support for that funding request. We received strong bipartisan support. The support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against this important funding, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate. They asked him to explain his vote. It was right here in Huntington, West Virginia, where he said, "I voted for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it"—right here in Huntington. They kept pressing him after that, and he said, well, he was proud of his vote. And finally he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

When it comes to Iraq, my opponent has more different positions than all his colleagues in the Senate combined. [*Laughter*] Senator Kerry once said, "It would be naive to the point of grave danger not to believe that, left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future of more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." End quote. In 2002, he voted for the war. But then he voted against body armor and combat pay for our troops. When the heat got on in the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Then several months later, he said he would have still voted to go to war, even knowing everything we know today. Earlier this week, he adopted the language of his one-time rival Howard Dean, saying it's the wrong war at the wrong time, even though he earlier said it was the right decision, and he supported it.

The newest wrinkle is that Senator Kerry has now decided we are spending too much money in Iraq, even though he criticized us earlier for not spending enough. One thing about Senator Kerry's position is clear: If he had his way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power and would still be a threat to the security and to the world.

During the next 4 years, we'll continue to work with our friends and allies to make us more secure and to make them more secure and to make the world more peaceful. We put together a broad coalition, about 40 nations in Afghanistan and some 30 in Iraq. But I'll assure you this: I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I've spent time with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. You know, I was having dinner with him one evening, and it dawned on me how remarkable it is that an American President could be talking about working together to make the world a better place. After all, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that we were at war with Japan. They were our sworn enemy. My dad, I'm sure your dads and granddads, fought against the Japanese. And yet, right after World War II, after we were victorious, Harry Truman and other Americans never abandoned this notion that freedom could change societies, and they stood the line. There was a lot of skeptics in those days. I can understand why. We were just at war with them. You can imagine why a lot of American people said, "Why are we wasting our time? Why do we care?"

Well, people did care. See, they cared because they had a vision of the future. And because they worked to help Japan become a democracy, today, Japan is an ally. Prime Minister Koizumi and I sit around the table talking about the peace. We're talking about using our influence to make the world a better place, not only for the people in our own country but for people around the world. We talk about peace in North Korea. We talk about peace in Iraq. We talk about feeding the hungry.

Liberty can change countries from enemies to friends. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, and they're going to be talking about the peace. They'll be talking about a better world. See, liberty has got the chance to make this world a more peaceful place. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that if given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. And I believe these things not because freedom is America's gift to the world, but because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom here at home and freedom abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming systems of Government, we will free more Americans to be able to realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the world to become more free and more peaceful.

You know, for all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I met a fellow behind the stage here who was at Ground Zero the same day I was at Ground Zero. He was there to save lives. I was there to thank people for saving lives—so on September the 14th, 2001, that—both of us were in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. I told him that. I said, "It's a day that I'll never forget." There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I tried to do my best to comfort those who had been in the rubble. A fellow looked me right in the eye and said, "Do not let me down." I wake up every morning—every morning—thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled our great country asking for the vote, I made a pledge to my fellow Americans that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. at the Tri-State Milton J. Ferguson Field. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Ironton, Ohio

September 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all. I'm glad you all are here. Thanks for coming out. I want to introduce you—you know your Senator, Mike DeWine. This is my friend Senator Zell Miller from Georgia. One Republican, one Democrat, all united to making this country a better place for everybody.

Thank you all for coming out to say hello. We're here to ask for the vote in Ironton, Ohio, and I appreciate you giving me a chance.

We've got plans to make this world a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place for every American. I'm here to ask for your help. I'd like to—I'd like your support, I appreciate your prayers. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thanks for coming out to say hello. I appreciate you. Thank you all.

Thank you, Mayor. I appreciate you coming.

Mayor John W. Elam. President Bush, it is certainly an honor to have you here. We're looking forward to 4 more years.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Mayor Elam. I have a proclamation here that I know will take awhile to read. And I would also like to present you with a key to the city of Ironton.

The President. Oh, yes. Thanks for coming out. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:14 p.m. at the Lawrence County Courthouse. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Presidential Determination and Certification Concerning Libya Under Section 101 and 102(b) of the Arms Export Control Act and Determination on Export-Import Bank Support for U.S. Exports to Libya

September 10, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–44

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination and Certification Concerning Libya Under Section 101 and 102(b) of the Arms Export Control Act and Determination on Export-Import Bank Support for U.S. Exports to Libya

Pursuant to section 101 of the Arms Export Control Act, I hereby determine that Libya received nuclear enrichment equipment, material, or technology after August 4, 1977. I hereby determine and certify that the continued termination of assistance, as required by this section, would have a serious adverse effect on vital United States interests and that I have received reliable assurances that Libya will not acquire or develop nuclear weapons or assist other nations in doing so.

Pursuant to section 102(b) of the Arms Export Control Act, I hereby determine that Libya, a non-nuclear weapon state, sought and received design information that I determine to be important to, and intended by Libya for use in, the development or manufacture of a nuclear explosive device. I hereby determine and certify that the application of sanctions, as required by this section, would have a serious adverse effect on vital United States interests.

Pursuant to section 2(b)(4) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended, I hereby determine and certify that it is in the national interest for the Export-Import Bank to guarantee, insure, or extend credit, or participate in the extension of credit in support of United States exports to Libya.

You are directed to report this determination to the Congress and to provide copies of the justification explaining the basis for this determination. You are further directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Memorandum on Continuation of the Exercise of Certain Authorities Under the Trading With the Enemy Act

September 10, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–45

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury

Subject: Continuation of the Exercise of Certain Authorities under the Trading with the Enemy Act

Under section 101(b) of Public Law 95–223 (91 Stat. 1625; 50 U.S.C. App. 5(b) note), and a previous determination on September 12, 2003 (68 *Fed. Reg.* 54325), the exercise of certain authorities under the Trading with the Enemy Act is scheduled to terminate on September 14, 2004.

I hereby determine that the continuation for 1 year of the exercise of those authorities with respect to the applicable countries is in the national interest of the United States.

Therefore, pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 101(b) of Public Law

95–223, I continue for 1 year, until September 14, 2005, the exercise of those authorities with respect to countries affected by:

(1) the Foreign Assets Control Regulations, 31 C.F.R. part 500;

(2) the Transaction Control Regulations, 31 C.F.R. part 505; and

(3) the Cuban Assets Control Regulations, 31 C.F.R. part 515.

The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:06 a.m., September 13, 2004]

NOTE: This memorandum will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 14.

Presidential Determination With Respect to Foreign Governments' Efforts Regarding Trafficking in Persons

September 10, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–46

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination with Respect to Foreign Governments' Efforts Regarding Trafficking in Persons

Consistent with section 110 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (Division A of Public Law 106–386), as amended, (the "Act"), I hereby:

Make the determination provided in section 110(d)(1)(A)(i) of the Act, with respect to Equatorial Guinea and Venezuela, not to provide certain funding for those countries' governments for fiscal year 2005, until such government complies with the minimum standards or makes significant efforts to bring itself into compliance, as may be determined by the Secretary of State in a report to the Congress pursuant to section 110(b) of the Act;

Make the determination provided in section 110(d)(1)(A)(ii) of the Act, with respect to Burma, Cuba, Sudan, and North Korea, not to provide certain funding for those countries' governments for fiscal year 2005, until such government complies with the minimum standards or makes significant efforts to bring itself into compliance, as may be determined by the Secretary of State in a report to the Congress pursuant to section 110(b) of the Act;

Make the determination provided in section 110(d)(3) of the Act, concerning the determinations of the Deputy Secretary of State with respect to Bangladesh, Ecuador, Guyana, and Sierra Leone;

Determine, consistent with section 110(d)(4) of the Act, with respect to Equatorial Guinea, for the implementation of programs, projects, or activities regarding police professionalization, business responsibility, and promotion of the rule of law, that provision to Equatorial Guinea of the assistance described in section 110(d)(1)(A)(i) of the Act for such programs, projects, or activities would promote the purposes of the Act or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States;

Determine, consistent with section 110(d)(4) of the Act, with respect to Sudan, for all programs, projects, or activities of assistance as may be necessary to implement a North/South peace accord and to address the crisis in Darfur, that provision to Sudan of the assistance described in section 110(d)(1)(B) of the

Act for such programs, projects, or activities would promote the purposes of the Act or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States; and

Determine, consistent with section 110(d)(4) of the Act, with respect to Venezuela, for all programs, projects, or activities designed to strengthen the democratic process, including strengthening of political parties and supporting electoral observation and monitoring, that provision to Venezuela of the assistance described in sections 110(d)(1)(A)(i) and 110(d)(1)(B) of the Act for such programs, projects, or activities would promote the purposes of the Act or is otherwise in the national interest of the United States.

The certification required by section 110(e) of the Act is provided herewith.

You are hereby authorized and directed to submit this determination to the Congress, and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks

September 10, 2004

Consistent with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency I declared on September 14, 2001, in Proclamation 7463, with respect to the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center, New York, New York, and the Pentagon, and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on the United States.

By Executive Order 13223 of September 14, 2001, and Executive Order 13253 of January 16, 2002, I delegated authority to the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Transportation to order members of the Reserve Components to active duty and to waive certain statutory military personnel requirements. By Executive Order 13235 of November 16, 2001, I delegated authority to the Secretary of Defense to exercise certain emergency construction authority. By Executive Order 13286 of February 28, 2003, I transferred the authority delegated to the Secretary of Transportation in Executive Order 13223 to the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Because the terrorist threat continues, the national emergency declared on September 14, 2001, and the measures taken on September 14, 2001, November 16, 2001, and January 16, 2002, to deal with that emergency, must continue in effect beyond September 14, 2004. Therefore, I am continuing in effect for an additional year the national emergency I declared on September 14, 2001, with respect to the terrorist threat.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 10, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 12:57 p.m., September 10, 2004]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on September 13.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Notice on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Terrorist Attacks on the United States

September 10, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, is to continue in effect for an additional year.

The terrorist threat that led to the declaration on September 14, 2001, of a national emergency continues. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect after September 14, 2004, the national emergency with respect to the terrorist threat.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 10, 2004.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

September 4

In the morning, in Cleveland, OH, the President had an intelligence briefing. He

then traveled to Broadview Heights, OH. Later, he traveled to Kirtland, OH.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Erie, PA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Frances beginning on September 3 and continuing.

September 5

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Parkersburg, WV. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

September 6

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stanislav Gross of the Czech Republic to congratulate him on assuming his new position and to discuss the situations in Afghanistan and Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing and a briefing on Hurricanes Frances and Ivan.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Poplar Bluff, MO.

In the evening, the President traveled to Kansas City, MO.

September 7

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then traveled to Lee's Summit, MO, where he began a bus tour.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Sedalia, MO, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Columbia, MO.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to designate Tim S. McClain as Acting Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Human Resources and Administration).

The President announced his intention to designate Cortright Wetherill, Jr., as a Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the Arts, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint W. Roy Grizzard as a member of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

The President announced his intention to appoint Michele Longo Eder and Thomas C. Royer as members of the Arctic Research Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee: Lawrence T. Babbio, Jr.; Gregory Q. Brown; Ken Dahlberg; William J. Hannigan; Stan Sigman; and Joseph R. Wright.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: Elisabeth D. DeVos, Mary Mochary, Mary M. Ourisman, Gabrielle B. Reynolds, David Rubenstein, Stephen Schwarzman, Alex Spanos, and Sandy Treadwell.

The President announced his intention to appoint Cheryl Bates-Harris and Dorothy L. Watson as members of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel.

The President announced his intention to designate Berthy De La Rosa-Aponte, as Chairperson of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel.

September 8

In the morning, the President met with James A. Baker III to discuss the upcoming Presidential debates. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Fort Pierce, FL, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with community members affected by Hurricane Frances.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Miami, FL, and went to the National Hurricane Center. He then toured the Center and received a briefing on Hurricanes Frances and Ivan. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The President announced his intention to nominate Catherine Todd Bailey to be Ambassador to Latvia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas V. Skinner to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (Enforcement and Compliance Assurance).

The President announced his intention to nominate Douglas Menarchik to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (Policy and Program Coordination).

The President announced his intention to nominate Howard J. Krongard to be Inspector General of the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to designate Daniel R. Levinson as Acting Inspector General at the Department of Health and Human Services.

September 9

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council. Later, he met with Principals of the Year award recipients.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Colmar, PA, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Eunice Sanchez. Later, he traveled to Johnstown, PA.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

September 10

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to discuss nuclear weapons proliferation, the situation in the Sudan, and other issues. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Huntington, WV, where he began a bus tour. Later, he traveled to Ironton, OH, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Portsmouth, OH, where he participated in an Ask President Bush event at Shawnee State University. Later, he traveled to Chillicothe, OH. While en route aboard the bus, he met with local union members and employees of the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant. At the Ross County Fairgrounds in Chillicothe, he made remarks at a rally.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard Greco, Jr., to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management) at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Patrick J. Leahy and John E. Sununu to be U.S. Representatives to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lisa Kirk Colburn as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Arts, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Public Interest Declassification Board: L. Britt Snider (Chairman), Martin Faga, Steven Garfinkel, Elizabeth Rindskopf Parker, and Richard N. Smith.

The President declared a major disaster in North Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Tropical Storm Frances beginning on September 7 and continuing.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted September 7

Paul A. Crotty,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York, vice Harold Baer, Jr., retiring.

Porter J. Goss,
of Florida, to be Director of Central Intelligence, vice George John Tenet, resigned.

D. Michael Rappoport,
of Arizona, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2008 (reappointment).

Submitted September 8

Catherine Todd Bailey,
of Kentucky, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Latvia.

Raymond F. DuBois,
of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness, vice Diane K. Morales, resigned.

Howard J. Krongard,
of New Jersey, to be Inspector General, Department of State, vice Clark Kent Ervin.

Douglas Menarchik,
of Texas, to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Patrick M. Cronin, resigned.

Thomas V. Skinner,
of Illinois, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice John Peter Suarez, resigned.

Submitted September 10

Carin M. Barth,
of Texas, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development, vice Angela Antonelli, resigned, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Jonathan W. Dudas,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, vice James Edward Rogan, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Albert A. Frink, Jr.,
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, vice Linda Mysliwy Conlin, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Susan Johnson Grant,
of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Energy, vice Bruce Marshall Carnes, resigned, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Ricardo H. Hinojosa,
of Texas, to be Chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, vice Diana E. Murphy, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Nadine Hogan,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring June 26, 2008, vice Frank D. Yturria, resigned, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Stephen L. Johnson,
of Maryland, to be Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Linda J. Fisher, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Paul Jones,
of Colorado, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2008, vice Charles L. Kolbe, term expired, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

James R. Kunder,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Wendy Jean Chamberlin, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Jon D. Leibowitz,
of Maryland, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for a term of 7 years from September 26, 2003, vice Mozelle Willmont Thompson, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Deborah P. Majoras,
of Virginia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the unexpired term of 7 years from September 26, 2001, vice Timothy J. Muris, resigned, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

John D. Rood,
of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of

America to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Enrique J. Sosa,
of Florida, to be a member of the Reform Board (Amtrak) for a term of 5 years, vice Linwood Holton, term expired, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Charles Graves Untermeyer,
of Texas, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Qatar, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Jack Vaughn,
of Texas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2006, vice Patricia Hill Williams, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Gary Lee Visscher,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for a term of 5 years, vice Isadore Rosenthal, term expired, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Richard Kenneth Wagner,
of Florida, to be a member of the National Institute for Literacy Advisory Board for a term expiring November 25, 2006, vice Robin Morris, term expired, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Scott Kevin Walker,
of Wisconsin, to be a member of the Advisory Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, vice Anthony S. Earl, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Roger W. Wallace,
of Texas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2008, vice Fred P. DuVal, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Aldona Wos,
of North Carolina, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Estonia, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Sean F. Cox,
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, vice Lawrence P. Zatkoff, retired.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released September 4

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Florida

Released September 6

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Responding to Hurricanes Charley and Frances

Released September 7

Transcript of press gaggles by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on designation of Iraq as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences

Released September 8

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Transcript of an interview of Dan Bartlett by John Roberts, CBS, "60 Minutes"

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 5005

Fact sheet: Leading the Way on Reforming and Strengthening Our Intelligence Services

Released September 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on the terrorist bombing at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia

Released September 10

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on sanctions to certain countries under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to North Carolina

Acts Approved by the President

Approved September 8

H.R. 5005 / Public Law 108–303
Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2004

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Presidential Determination With Respect to Foreign Governments' Efforts Regarding Trafficking in Persons, memorandum—1918

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